Support Systems for Learning: Governance and Administration

Commissioned Papers: Volume 6

May 1988

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Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:
Support systems for learning, governance and administration

(Commissioned papers, ISSN 0840-5069 ; v. 6)

ISBN 0-7726-0844-X

1. School management and organization — British Columbia. I. Storey, Vernon James, 1943– . II. British Columbia. Royal Commission on Education (1987-1988) III. Series.

LB2891.B7S86 1988 379.1'52'09711 C88-092162-5

Acknowledgements

The research team for this aspect of the Royal Commission's inquiry benefited greatly from consultations with many leaders in education. We consulted with, among others, a selected group of eight elementary and secondary principals from a wide range of locations throughout the province, to ask specific questions about school administration and to hear their views on a broad range of topics. Meetings were held with members of the Vancouver Elementary Administrators' Association and their counterparts from that district's secondary administrators' association. We also met with representatives of the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents and, on another occasion, of the British Columbia School District Secretary-Treasurers' Association. The insights of these key participants in the ducation process helped us greatly in our investigation.

We invited other key leaders in education to respond to the early results of our investigation and to offer their perspectives on the current scene in British Columbia and across Canada. We appreciated very much the worthwhile contribution to this phase of our research of Dr. George Pedersen, President of the University of Western Ontario and formerly President of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. Dr. Rod Wickstrom, Superintendent of Schools in School District 37 (Delta) and previously Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Sakatchewan, offered us the benefit of insights gained from his experience.

With the group investigating the area of education finance, we consulted with three acknowledged leaders in the field of labour relations to gain their perspectives: Mr. Brian Bastien, Director of Administration, School District 41 (Burnaby), Mr. Peter McAllister, Executive Director, Victoria Cancer Control Agency, and Professor Mark Thompson of the Faculty of Commerce, University of Britsh Columbia.

The research team met, formally and informally, with many other groups and individuals who added valuable data. Dr. Russ Leskiw provided significant help by preparing background material on specific aspects of our investigation into the structures and processes of education in this province. His assistance, like that of so many others, was an essential and valued component of our inquiry.

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1. Support Systems for Learning

Fundamentally, the function of education's governing and administrative structures and processes is to support learning. Governance and administration, then, are student-focussed in their intent and must be student-focussed in their operation. Two aspects of the Commission's early work support these assertions. First, the selection of the title for the Commission report, "A Legacy for Learners," and the Commissioner's statements about the intents conveyed by that title, have made the emphasis clear to British Columbians generally and to the Commission's research teams in particular. Second, the framework provided by the Commissioner for the series of technical papers of which this report is a part prefixed this area of study, along with finance, with the phrase "Support Systems for Learning." This focus has provided a frame of reference for the examination of those support systems for learning designated as governance and administration.

The inclusion of governance and administration as key areas of investigation indicates clearly that these systems are considered by the Commission to be both fundamental and important. All major decisions regarding purpose and direction reside properly with a governing body. That body may be the government of the province, it may be a local school board, or it may be school-based. Decisions about purpose and direction constitute policy which require effective administration by the Ministry of Education, by a school district's central office and by the administrators and staff of a school.

Effective governance and effective administration require communication, cooperation and mutual support between and among governors and administrators at all levels—province, district, and school. Responsibility and accountability are shared for many tasks. Expertise in administration complements and supports wisdom in governance. The essence of leadership is that it facilitates the processes of governance and administration, that it responds accountably and that it establishes both a climate for and a pattern of operation which bring together the structures and the processes of governance and administration in a manner which obtains the best from both; the best being that which is in the interests of students.

It is self-evident to say that predicting the future is a high-risk venture. In a rapidly changing world, it is increasingly difficult even to create plausible alternative future scenarios. Yet planning for the future is essential. To proceed with that planning in the context of a long-range view of education's future demands that we use present information. Judgements must be made on the basis of that information with the intent of develop ing the education system in ways which seem most likely to foster its effectiveness, its responsiveness to the public will, and its task of preserving and enhancing the Canadian expression of democracy.

Because our emphasis was on educating the learners of the future, we have sought to present suggestions which reflect basic values and principles likely to endure. As a result, we have tried to avoid what might be termed managerial regulations which do not address fundamental issues or which attempt to provide relatively short-term solutions for present problems. These operational and immediate considerations, we feel, can be addressed through consultation, discussion, and administrative action.

Our report, therefore, recognizes the *focus* of the Commission's inquiry—providing a legacy for learners. It adopts a frame of reference which sees clearly the *role* of governance and administration—to support learning. It recognizes the *stature* of these support systems—they are of fundamental importance. It acknowledges the *function* of leadership—to ensure that governance and administration can contribute to the achievement of education's primary task. Finally, this report is oriented toward the future, acknowledging both the difficulty of being precise about that future and the unavoidable demand that we act both responsively and creatively in regard to it.

2. The Research Mandate and Process

In addition to the early establishment of a focus for the investigation commissioned by government, the Commissioner identified a specific mandate for the work of the various research groups. The task was to examine carefully the education system as it is at present and to propose to the Commissioner courses of action which might strengthen the system for the task of preparing students for life, career and citizenship as our society enters the twenty-first century.

Education and any democratically determined structure or process are at best means to achieve ends. The purpose of our investigation was to examine the extent to which present structures and processes achieve the will of the people which they exist to serve. This required that we focus on the conditions which contribute to effective education and that we analyze the extent to which present political and administrative processes—policy development and policy execution—achieve the ends valued and expressed by society.

Traditional and Emerging VALUES and Operating ASSUMPTIONS

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contribute to the development of
STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES
which were examined topic by topic by raising
critical questions regarding three dimensions:

1. Current conditions and how they are viewed
2. The desirable state of affairs
3. The conditions necessary to foster or achieve this desired state of affairs

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This examination produced
CRITICAL QUESTIONS
developed from the values and assumptions and restated as
ASSERTIONS
designed as a basis for discussion

↓

through a
PROCESS OF INVESTIGATION
conducted by a research team who utilized

1. Commission hearings and briefs
2. Informed individual and group opinion from sought out experts and representatives of groups
3. Current literature including theory and research pertinent to this area

as a basis for a review of the critical questions and assertions
and matters arising during the investigation

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to prepare a technical report which included
SUGGESTIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER
to be considered in the development of

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THE REPORT OF THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

Figure 1. A Model for Examining Governance and Administration

We viewed processes of governance and administration in the context of broad values held and expressed by society as means toward the end of effective education of students in British Columbia. We applied principles which are pertinent to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system and which are grounded in sound administration research, theory and practice.

To carry out this investigation, we utilized a model which addressed critical questions about various aspects of governing and administrative supports for learning (Figure 1). We derived those questions, which are listed in Appendix B, from consideration of existing structures and processes, from issues posed in briefs, and from examination of current knowledge about governance and administration. Throughout the investigation, we applied both traditional and emerging values and discernible opera ting assumptions to identify and propose those conditions, structures and processes which will best contribute to the effective education of students.

We shaped and investigated specific questions according to three dimensions: current conditions, desirable conditions and fostering conditions, or, What is? What should be? How might we achieve that desired state? After initial study and refinement of topics, we restated these critical questions as assertions, to sharpen the process of investigation by providing statements against which current practice could be considered.

We used four major sources of data in our investigation. The first involved consideration of submissions to the Royal Commission by individuals and groups who spoke at Commission hearings or presented written briefs. Many of these people did both. In some instances, we were able to meet with organizational representatives to discuss the contents of their briefs in greater depth. One team member reviewed every brief as it pertained to governance and administration and prepared back ground papers on several topics, reflecting the views expressed in the briefs. Each of us read many of the briefs, particularly the major submissions.

Our second strategy was to commission papers on specific topics which emerged throughout the inquiry as issues to be addressed. These papers provided in-depth background in areas where it seemed clear that our investigation would benefit from a high level of awareness of current policy and practice in British Columbia and elsewhere. On the matter of the length and structure of the school day and school year, for example, we examined current practice across Canada, in the United States, in four European countries, and in Japan.

Third, we held several intensive consultations with acknowledged leaders from education and other fields. In each instance, the topics for review had arisen from other aspects of the investigation process. Questions, discussion outlines, and supporting materials were provided to the participants in advance of our meetings with them. These activities enabled us to tap the resources of people who were widely recognized as leaders in such fields as personnel relations, labour negotiations, and educational administration.

Fourth, each of us reviewed significant portions of the literature available in the areas of our investigation and met frequently as a team to clarify issues, to report progress, and to share and discuss results. In addition, we met with investigators from other areas of the commission's mandate to broaden the range of comment and opinion on our work.

3. The Values Context

Governments—national, provincial and local—are the central authority under whose aegis societal values are identified and then translated by society's institutions into objectives; these to be attained through careful planning and implementation.

This report will address the matter of authority and responsibility by examining the legislative, statutory and policy pro visions for education which determine the patterns of governance and administration. Essentially, it is an examination of the locus of control, or "Who decides what?", and the processes of applying these decisions to the benefit of students.

Governance and administration deal with the legal provision for education and the organizational structures and processes whereby "the will of the people" is translated into the provision of teaching-learning situations, or "schools."

In British Columbia, the assignment of authority and responsibility has been determined by legislation. Traditionally in this province, governance of education has been executed by assigning authority to the Minister of Education, with powers and authorities delegated to local school boards and independent schools. Each level of government has defined roles and responsibilities which establish an administrative organization for translating policy decisions into action.

The traditional form of public education in North America is based on fundamental values which have shaped statutes, policies and regulations. Society's adherence to these values, many of which originated in early constitutional initiatives in the "New World," created a social dynamic which was essentially open, egalitarian and democratic. The demand for universal mass education saw the coming into existence of schools. Schooling is a major instrument for the expression of the public will in a democratic society. In a democratic society, the school system both models and maintains the essential attributes of that society.

Definition of "School"

"School" generally implies a number of students in classes gathered in one building. For purposes of this examination, however, the term will be broadly defined to encompass any individual or group teaching-learning situation accepted and approved by the governing authority. Elsewhere in this report we will propose that the province may authorize home schooling within guidelines. Our definition would imply, therefore, that the acceptance referred to above would be the acceptance by the Ministry of Education of home schooling as an option. Approval of all independent schools and home schooling situations would be a responsibility of either the province or local school boards. A recent Alberta document (Alberta Education, 1987) defines a school as "a structured environment within which an education program takes place under the authority of the Minister, a school board, or a parent." Given our assertion that the province has a responsibility to ensure an adequate education for *all* children of school age, any redefinition would clearly have some cost implications.

Traditional Values

The appropriateness and efficacy of current mechanisms of governance and administration were examined in the context of traditional tenets and values generally held with regard to education. The investigation also identified and examined several emerging values. By focussing first on values as they pertain to governance and administration, important questions were posed and addressed. The answers assisted in identifying those conditions which will best

contribute to the attainment of an education system in which the values of society prevail, and to the development of appropriate governance and administration supports for that system.

The relative structural stability of schools and classrooms over the decades are both evident and periodically subject to criticism. This stability may well indicate that generally speaking, society adheres to a set of basic and relatively unquestioned traditional values.

In addition to those values that have traditionally guided the behaviour of elected representatives and appointed administrators, there are a number of emerging trends. The extent to which the tenets underlying these emerging values are antithetical to traditional tenets creates a tension often expressed as dissatisfaction or questioning of the existing system. This poses the question of whether the system should be revised, and if so, the extent to which change should occur.

If the governance and administration of education are to be reviewed, both traditional and emerging values must be identified and examined. The extent of adherence to or rejection of value positions and presuppositions assists in posing and addressing important questions. The resolution of conflicts and the answering of questions on the basis of value positions facilitates the statement of ideal states or conditions. The actual existence of these conditions can then be examined.

The suggestions derived from such an examination address current conditions with a view to providing the optimum situation for the governance and administration of education in British Columbia. Education is one of the most fundamental undertakings of a democratic society. As such, it is a value-driven activity. The following statements represent enduring or traditional values; values which are generally held for education in British Columbia and throughout Canada. Each of these statements carries implications for the ways in which schools are governed and administered. Each has helped to define and guide this inquiry and to shape its recommendations.

1. Free public education is the right of every child.

2. The province has the responsibility to provide for the education of its youth to all who can benefit from this service.

3. Education in schools is a key aspect of preparation for citizenship and responsible participation in society.

4. Schools which are inclusionary and accessible to all best contribute to the development of a tolerant and integrated society.

5. The education and intellectual development of the young of a society is an essential social and economic investment.

6. Schools effectively provide social stability and reinforce generally held cultural values. This is especially true in a rapidly changing society.

7. Effective governance comes from a mandate (a will of constituents expressed to their representatives) which is rooted in expressed values.

8. Public control of education through democratically elec ted representatives is desirable.

9. The governance of education must be open and public to ensure accountability and democratic scrutiny.

10. Significant local autonomy is desirable, given the intimate and potent role of teachers and schools operating "in loco parentis."

11. A balance of lay control through open governance, and implementation by a professionally trained administration most effectively translates a public mandate into a public service.

12. Educational practice is best implemented by professional educators who are guided by the knowledge and skills of their profession.

These values have provided a foundation for our education system to which society has given general assent.

Emerging Values

In addition to traditional values, there have been through out the history of education, trends or emerging values. Each has in its own time been the subject of debate and challenge. Some have eventually received broad acceptance and have themselves become "traditional" values. We have identified the following statements as examples of today's emerging values. Each was considered during the investigation.

1. The needs of students are best met by enhancing the professional conditions contributing to the performance of those charged with responding to student needs.

2. Provision for competition and entrepreneurial opportunity are essential and can improve standards.

3. Wherever possible and appropriate, decisions should be made as close as possible to the level of student contact.

4. Involvement in the decision-making processes of schools is predicated on the individual's right, competency and willingness to participate.

5. Schools and other social agencies establish their right to public resources on the basis of their performance and their contribution to society as a whole.

Operating Assumptions

The existing model of school governance and administration in British Columbia is based on a set of operating assumptions which permeate the statutes, regulations, structures and processes resulting from these assumptions. The traditional assignment of authority and responsibility for education in British Columbia has been through legislation which defines functions and assigns them to particular groups or individual office-holders. This emphasis on the "who" and "how" has created a system which can function devoid of goals or direction. The assumptions which appear to underlie the existing legislation and consequent governance and administration structures include the following:

1. If appropriate systems and institutions are created and specific procedures and divisions of power and responsibility are established, then the system will run smoothly, effectively and efficiently.

2. The provincial components of governance and administration (Minister and Ministry) are and should be the salient empowering, managing and supervising agencies of the system.

3. The Minister is and should be the ultimate policy- and decision-making authority with the legitimate right of intervention in that he shall have approval and/or veto powers in all matters.

4. Local systems and institutions are purely creatures of provincial authority and as such are subject to scrutiny and, if warranted, intervention by the Ministry.

5. Local authorities bear the responsibility to establish educational policies and objectives and are responsible and accountable to both the provincial government (Ministry) and the local electorate for the delivery of services.

These assumptions have contributed to and undergird a system which is essentially regulatory rather than responsive. Such a system tends to become preoccupied with control and less concerned with responsiveness and service. To the extent that this has been or could be the case, our concern has been to reinforce realistically the attainment of effective public education. This report focusses on systems and processes which will enhance the responsiveness of the system at both the local and the provincial level. Fundamentally, our concern is with learners. Beyond that, we are concerned that the local community be recognized as a critical unit in the democratic governance of education.

4. Identifying The Issues

It became clear during our inquiry that very few issues existed in isolation. Matters which seemed at first to be discrete and distinct shared much with other issues. Other research groups which were addressing quite different matters from those addressed by other groups seemed often to be concerned with similar matters of structure and process. Inevitably, the topics to be addressed clustered as sets of issues; different in specific substance, but alike in kind. This section of the report addresses those clusters of issues; the next will deal with specific topics reflected in briefs and submissions to the commission and in other dimensions of our inquiry.

Purpose and Direction

Almost every significant achievement in our society and beyond, whether individual or collective, has been attained by those who have had a clear sense of purpose. The literature says much about the effectiveness of organizations with clear, well-understood goals. Conversely, many records of failure in organizations document a lack of vision, an absence of fundamental purpose, and hence a lack of collective human commitment, as a significant factor in the non-achievement of goals.

A society undergoing rapid and often radical change without a basic structure of goals is a society at risk, particularly where its basic social institutions are concerned. The growing complexity of contemporary North American society demands clarity of fundamental purpose if our social structure is to retain focus and direction. The goals a society sets for its institutions and organizations provide benchmarks for decision-making. They ensure systems responsive to essential change but resistant to that which would dilute their efforts in pursuit of goals. The central concern of the Commission is with the education of our youth. The concern of this report is with ensuring that mechanisms of governance and administration are effective support systems for learning. Each of those purposes can be achieved only if society's expectations of its schools, expressed as a mission for education and communicated to schools and school districts as statements of organizational mandate, are clear, definite and relevant.

Education in Canada is clearly a provincial responsibility. It follows, therefore, that the task of defining the fundamental aims, purposes, and priorities of education is a provincial task. It is also an essential task and a collaborative undertaking.

Process

Education is both an essential and a costly function of society in which virtually all British Columbians participate. Many have children in schools, many work in the education system, some have business or organizational interests in schools, and virtually all contribute to the funding of the system through taxation. While the provincial government is charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining the education system, that is, in a democratic society, a shared responsibility. The first and most compelling task of government in relation to schools is to provide direction; to vest the system with purpose. The achievement of purpose is most effectively carried out as a shared endeavour which will ultimately gain the commitment of those sharing in defining the structures and processes of schooling.

Fundamental to establishing processes which will enhance commitment to the decisions of those who govern for the people is a commitment to dialogue. Relationships among the major players in the education system in British Columbia have been characterized often by rhetoric which has the effect of diverting attention from the major issue—the welfare of the learner. There is clearly a need for structures, processes and communication practices which will both refocus and sustain attention on this central theme.

The requirement for a focussed mission carries with it a need for stability and predictability of process. If clear purpose and mandate are essential to building a successful school system, a degree of predictability is no less essential to the process of building it. Undoubtedly, a responsive school system, and the government which supports that system, must change as needs change. The provincial, national and global economic situation will inevitably change over time, and this will necessitate changes in levels of funding for education. Curriculum must be developed and modified to meet emerging needs. The process of planning and decision-making in areas where social change necessitates responsiveness in the school system will be enhanced by a commitment to stability in that process even where the outcomes of decisions mean that schools must adjust, sometimes radically. Education's governors and administrators, and ultimately its teachers and students, must respond vigorously to society's requirements. Stability of process and structure, and a commitment to drawing on the sensitivity to the community of those who govern and the skills of those who administer will enhance both the quality and the acceptability of policy decisions.

Authority

Effectiveness of operation begins with a clear statement of purpose, which we have called a mission. A statement of mission, including the primary goals of education in the province, provides the essential framework within which the Ministry of Education, school boards, and schools carry out the task of schooling.

The capability of these institutions to ensure that they contribute most effectively to the accomplishment of education's goals depends on the mandates granted to them. Mandates are communicated through legislation and the communication of other public policy decisions in such forms as ministry directives and school board policies. Many of the specific topics addressed in this paper are issues of mandate. While mission may be communicated in a short statement or in a document of that title, mandates are more likely to be expressed through policy statements, particularly legislation, which express the authority and the responsibility to act.

Leadership

As the mandates of those who must lead provincially, at the school district level, and in schools are clarified, the issue of leadership also becomes clearer. So also does the matter of the interdependence of governance and administration. The local school district provides a useful example. The primary responsibility for leadership through the development of policies which best express the public will rests with the board of school trustees. The primary responsibility for the execution and administration of policy rests with the superintendent of schools. The superintendent is also charged with the responsibility of providing policy advice to the board.

The historic and traditional separation of policy authority from administrative responsibility has always been unrealistic when carried to its extreme. There is clearly a close working relationship between the board and its superintendent, both on policy issues and on matters of administration. That relationship speaks more of interdependency than of separation, more of integration than of isolation.

Accountability

Accountability is a multi-tiered responsibility. Once mandates have been clarified, the question of who is responsible for what takes on new relevance. Few would argue that schools which serve the learner well must be accountable schools. In the same way, support systems of governance and administration must be accountable for their service on behalf of learners. The public will is being served, public funds are being expended, and a public accounting is appropriate.

At least two dimensions of accountability have relevance for this discussion. The first is the matter of determining who is accountable for what. We see the local school district as a primary focus for this operational accountability. The

district, rather than the school, reflects the nature of the broader community. As a policy-setting and budgeting unit, it is the site of immediate accountability to the public through their electoral voice. The school district has the capacity to assess not only learning, but also the wide range of other dimensions of school and district operations. Clearly school boards have throughout their history effectively fulfilled this role.

There is also a legitimate and an important role for both the school, as a part of the immediate and most local community, and the Ministry of Education, on behalf of government and the wider public. Our point is simply that the roles of each must be clarified.

The second dimension of accountability is the need for consistency in the processes used to monitor the system. Programs of assessment, whether they examine learning or facilities, depend for their reliability and usefulness over time on the quality and utility of the data that they generate. Information that facilitates comparison with other similar schools and districts must reflect appreciation of the differences between long-term and short-term attainment of goals. Obviously, evaluation activities must change as programs and services change. Optimum progress, however, demands complete and consistent data which are understood and not challenged in regard to reliability or motive.

Participation

Democracy, and the political processes which both energize and protect the Canadian expression of democracy, assume the existence of differing interests and priorities among the members of society. It is part of the essence of democracy that those differing interests are not only acknowledged but also recognized as legitimate expressions of social needs and interests. The art of politics in a democratic society is the ability to accommodate differing needs and demands in ways that protect the interests of the society as a whole.

Citizens and citizen groups in twentieth century North America demand not only to be recognized as part of the mosaic of our society, but also to be heard and to participate directly in democratic processes and such political decisions as the allocation of scarce resources.

Schools are a particular example. Parents and parent groups have expressed repeatedly to the Commission their desire to be heard, acknowledged, and responded to, especially by the local school, on matters affecting their children. Their immediate recourse, either on matters which seem unable to be resolved at the school level or which are beyond the scope of the individual child or school, is to the local school board. Parents view trustees as their representatives, able to respond to broader or more difficult concerns. The accessibility and responsiveness made possible through a system of local school boards and trustees is unparalleled by any other unit of government. School boards are essential to maintaining a system which serves the best interests of learners.

In a society which is becoming not only more complex, but also more impersonal and fragmented, parents and community groups are likely to see schools and school boards as potentially responsive bodies. Many are already exceptionally responsive and encouraging of citizen participation in the process of education. The absence of widespread assertions and evidence to the contrary in submissions to the Royal Commission suggest support for our assertion that schools and school districts are integral parts of the definition of community in the province of British Columbia.

Access

In recent years, we have moved from a perspective which saw schools as relatively exclusive institutions within a society which was also relatively exclusive, to a perspective which sees schools and society as inclusive of all. Special needs students have moved from non-particlipation to residential settings into special schools. From those schools, they have moved to special classes in regular schools and to supported instruction in regular classes. Expectations have also changed. Schools are expected to be accessible to all, and access is defined not simply in terms of finding space in a building, but in terms of learning programs appropriate to the individual's needs.

The question of access raises the question of the scope of services to be provided by schools. In a society where the school is the primary care-giving agency during the day for many children, the matter of access to services required by children but beyond the school's traditional role becomes a question to be addressed.

Choice

One of the major recurring themes, evident in almost all aspects of the Commission's work, is the issue of choice. People in a democratic society want freedom of choice, particularly as it affects the education of their young. This desire for choice may become problematic in some instances, if particular interests place excessive demands on available resources or are at variance with the general good of society.

What becomes an issue is not only freedom of choice but also the delimitation of choice. The tension between "freedom to" and "freedom from" must be examined in the context of the values basic to our Canadian democratic way of life as manifest in British Columbia—in particular, in its schools.

The strong tradition of a Canadian cultural mosaic has been maintained and strengthened through provision for a system of compulsory schooling. Provision of a non-discriminatory education system with a curriculum designed for the broad spectrum of ethno-cultural diversity has aided in the effort to develop a tolerant, integrated society. Constitutional principles and strong norms of integration have run counter to forces toward segregation. The history of instances when this inclusionary principle has been tested is one of decisions and judgments that have required the public education system to include and to provide for the special case. The Canadian experience in this regard is respected world-wide.

While not imposing religious or political values upon students, and while making broad provision for variation in form, the public school system has avoided socio-economic stratification and fragmentation on the basis of ethno-cultural attributes and differences. The resulting social bonding is referred to as the Canadian cultural mosaic. Again, the resulting society is recognized internationally for its tolerance and diplomacy.

The fragmentation of society into groups with particular value systems, ethno-cultural attributes, or socio-economic characteristics is not compatible with the values generally held and expressed by British Columbians. The potential for inter-group strife, and the gradual lessening of mutual tolerance and under standing which could result from the "tribalization" of our young runs counter to principles of positive inter-group and interpersonal relations. At a time when British Columbia is experiencing massive multicultural change, it is not surprising that there is pressure for insular education systems. Compelling evidence from Europe and the United States suggests that a universal public education system is to be preferred. This tension between the particular and the general interest must be addressed.

The economic considerations of providing for choice through vouchers or education tax credits are addressed in another report to the Commissioner. However, the potential of a voucher system for balkanizing society cannot be discounted. Any measure which provides individual parents with the relatively unfettered right to withdraw from a system of public education can contribute to the coalescing of minorities into new systems of education. Such an eventuality will, if the state wishes to maintain an integrated society, require a massive system for monitoring curriculum and the content of instruction. Not to develop such safeguards is to expose British Columbia, within one generation, to the intolerance and conflict now prevalent in numerous other countries.

5. Fundamental Premises

Our investigation began with a set of key questions and an examination of traditional and emerging values relevant to the education of children in our society. As we have noted, we have endeavoured to maintain a focus on action which has the potential to affect positively and significantly education in this province in the future.

Subsequent sections of this report will address the issues identified previously, by examining specific structures and processes of governance and administration. Our consideration of societal values and major issues established a basis for positions which then led us to propose actions which reflect at least eight fundamental premises.

Education and the Future of British Columbia

The building of a strong education system, in whatever form that system may take in the future, is fundamental to British Columbia's economic growth and to the preservation of the fundamental values and ideals of our society. Success in the educational endeavour depends upon a reasoned consensus in society regarding fundamental goals and purposes, and upon clear articulation of those goals and establishment of direction by those who govern.

Commitment to a Common Purpose

We will present recommendations intended to capitalize on the capabilities of those close to learners and schools, those responsible for the outcomes of schooling, and those who depend on schools to prepare citizens and members of the workforce to assume a responsible place in society. Our purpose is to acknowledge and emphasize that it is in the long-term interests of our society that the governance, administration, and implementation processes of education in British Columbia be characterized more by dialogue than by confrontation, more by considered support from those who govern than by critical comment which shifts the debate away from the welfare of learners.

Local Governance of Education

The principle of locally elected lay governance, with democratic elections at the local level, is clearly espoused, to ensure optimum responsiveness of schools and school systems, and provision for citizen access and redress. The immediate unit of reference for the majority of those closely involved with education is the local school. Beyond that level, the local school board provides citizens with ready opportunities for dialogue, debate, influence and direct involvement in education, in a setting where, as in most jurisdictions in North America, access to senior government is more difficult.

The Limits of Choice

The Canadian expression of democracy values diversity within the limits of tolerance and a common commitment to certain widely accepted principles of law, government, and social behaviour. It is essential to the maintenance of our society that choice in education be fostered within a framework which will effectively prevent isolation and fragmentation and which will protect both the interests of children and the principles of Canadian democracy.

School Autonomy

The independence and initiative of individual schools, their administrators and their staffs are to be encouraged, within a context in which the school *district* is viewed as a supportive, facilitative structure. The primary task of the district is to ensure access, program suitability, school responsiveness and equitable treatment for all students within a system which reflects the mandate granted by society generally and by the local community in particular.

Parent and Community Influence

In a rapidly changing society, where traditional structures are in transition and technological change is proceeding more rapidly than ever before, schools will increasingly be expected to be responsive. Audiences and stakeholders who have traditionally allowed and expected schools to shape their programs and directions in relative independence will expect opportunity to impact key dimensions of school operations. Parents, in particular, will expect that their children be provided with an education which meets identified needs, and that they will have a partnership role in the process of schooling.

Services Beyond Schooling

At least three major social and economic developments will change the face of schooling as we have known it. Changes in family structure, the changing nature of the workforce, and increasingly competitive demands for public fiscal resources will necessitate new approaches to the provision of services to children by social agencies other than schools. Schools may of necessity have to serve as the primary coordinating agencies for these services.

The Welfare of Learners

We have examined the range of institutions and settings in which education is provided. We have concluded that the provincial responsibility for education, and the local responsibility mandated as a delegation of a share of that responsibility, goes beyond the traditional provision of schools. In our view, the state holds in trust the guardianship and development of learners where their educational well-being is concerned. This requires that the province share with local authorities the task of monitoring all settings in which the young of our society are educated.

6. Mission and Mandate

Governments speak frequently of having been given a mandate by the electorate. That mandate is granted on the basis of the public's acceptance of the stated vision for government held by those who would govern. Vision is expressed as a mission and a plan of action as the means to realize the vision,. In this sense, support for government is an expression of the public will, a will which drives and directs the services and programs which serve our society. In this instance, we focus particularly on the matter of the public will for education, and on the means by which it can be interpreted and implemented for the public good.

British Columbians are generally supportive of public education. An analysis of surveys, polls, studies and major reviews such as *Let's Talk About Schools* indicates that the public is not generally dissatisfied with its public schools. There are particular concerns, most of which have been the focus of submissions to the Royal Commission. On examination, these concerns have more to do with the desire for more effective conditions and processes than with a call for rejection or even major restructuring of public education.

The values which have contributed to the development of the present system of universal public education are still held strongly, both by the parents of students and by the general public. Specific concerns and criticisms hinge upon an uncertainty about whether the conditions basic to attaining effective education prevail to a sufficient extent.

The task of establishing a mission for education in British Columbia is clearly a responsibility of government. There does not presently exist a clearly stated, widely known statement of mission for education in British Columbia which would place education appropriately in the context of the overall social and economic development of the province. Further, there does not appear to be a consensus among the major parties involved in education as to what the mission should be and which aspects of it should receive priority attention.

Establishing a mission for education in British Columbia is part of the process of carrying out the mandate granted legislatively and electorally. In Canada, there is a clear statutory statement that education is a provincial responsibility. That statement provides the legislative mandate to provincial government. In British Columbia and in other provinces, government is chosen on the basis of perceived congruence between the expressed public will and the policies of those who would govern. That is the electoral mandate to government.

The task of government is to establish and maintain congruence between its goals and policies and what it perceives to be the public will. This is not simply a reactive task; it requires leadership by government which goes beyond simply asses sing the public mood to charting a clear direction for society in a manner which reflects the mandate granted.

The mandate granted to government is carried out through the policies, structures and processes established by government. The extent to which these are congruent with the public will and with the desires of those governed is the substance of the political process and of political issues.

A statement of mission for education is an item of fundamental policy. The task of establishing that mission is clearly a responsibility of government. In that statement, government expresses its understanding of its mandate to educate and establishes the basic purposes which it seeks to achieve for learners. We believe that sufficient public consensus regarding the mandate for education exists so that a draft statement of mission can be developed and proposed by the Royal Commission.

Suggestion 1

That the following draft statement of mission be accepted for public discussion and for review by government to establish its congruence with present and proposed future directions, and that following discussion and review, it be adopted in its final form as the mission of education in British Columbia:

The mission of education in the schools of British Columbia is a four-fold mission, to be achieved in a context which strengthens our democratic society. It has an intellectual, a vocational, a social, and a personal component.

Intellectual
The future demands that the learner acquire not only specific skills, knowledge, and understanding in the key areas of communication, computation and the legacy of human achievement, but also the skills of learning, of acquisition of knowledge and of critical analysis and evaluation of knowledge.

Vocational
The future demands that schools prepare students with the skills necessary to enter a world of work in which their ability to contribute and to benefit will depend on mastery of the intellectual component of their schooling and the ability and willingness to adapt to change and the need for new skills.

Social
The future of democratic society demands that its citizens understand and respect the basic requirements of life in community, that they possess the basic social skills necessary to function in that setting, and that they contribute to the preservation and strengthening of the Canadian expression of democracy.

Personal
It is a fundamental goal for learners that their acquisition of the intellectual, vocational, and social skills developed through their school education will enable them to attain personal satisfaction in their accomplishment and their potential.

Many briefs and submissions to the Royal Commission called for a clear statement of guiding principles, or of mission, for schooling in British Columbia. The establishment of a clear mission for education is prerequisite to two other steps. The first is the establishment of mandates which will guide in the pursuit of system goals; legitimizing, defining, guiding, and in some cases restricting, its activities. The second is the development of long-range plans which flow logically from mission and which are within the scope of the mandate granted.

The establishment of a mission for education enables discussion and evaluation of the extent to which public policy reflects the expressed will of the public, or the accuracy with which the mandate has been interpreted.The extent to which government seeks an expression of the public will provides a basis for supportable policies. The expression of an accepted, correctly interpreted mandate defines the accountability of those who govern and, through structures and processes, those who administer.

When public policy is clearly stated as a mission for education and the necessary legislative and procedural support to operate the system is established, local units of governance and provincial, local, and school-level administrators, or policy implementers, are enabled to function effectively. These mandates for action allow both governance and administration to achieve the will of the people. Without stated mandate, administrative structures can be self-serving for lack of connection to the public will.

If governance and administration are to be optimally effective as support systems for learning, conditions must exist which ensure congruence between public values, government policy and administrative action. Stating these conditions and examining the extent to which they prevail achieves two purposes. First, it clarifies and describes what would contribute to effective public education. Second, it identifies discrepancies from the ideal, thereby laying the basis for recommendations which would make public education more effective. In this process of examination and development, it is imperative that those values which undergird education in a free democratic society are in constant focus. Without that focus, the means may not achieve the desired ends. They may even become ends in themselves.

In this investigation, we have distinguished between mission, as the creative perception of the path toward a desired future for learners, and mandates (Figure 2). We have defined mandate as specific authorization and direction to act, found in terms of reference, statutory and legal frameworks, and policy guidelines. Mandate is given rather than taken; within its scope, the organization can develop and communicate its particular mis sion. The recommendations presented in this report endeavour to clarify key aspects of the mandate of local governing authorities and the schools for which they are responsible.

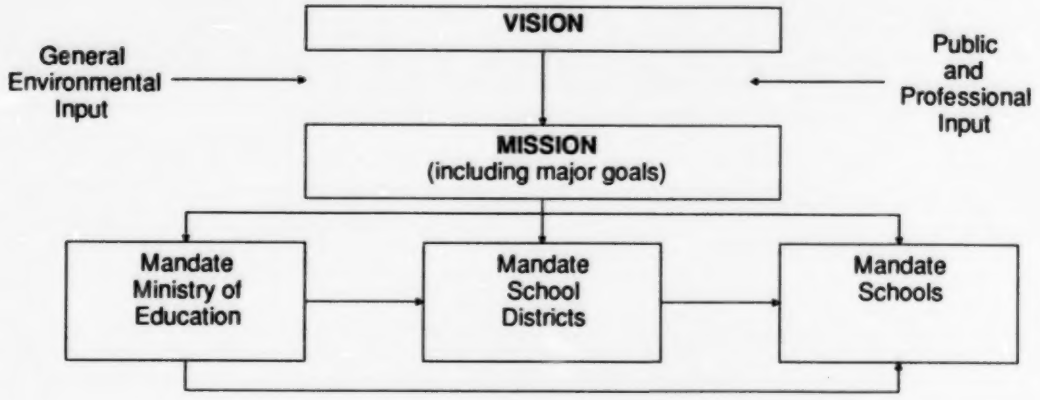

Figure 2. Defining Mission, Goals and Mandates

7. Planning, Leadership, and Fulfilment of Mandates

The relationships between various groups in education in British Columbia demonstrate a current and long-standing climate of hostility and lack of trust. To quote from a submission from the British Columbia School District Secretary-Treasurers' Association, "For the past ten years, the *image of public education* has been marred by contention and confrontation. And yet, the work of the classroom—*the reality of public education*, proceeds with vigour and excellence as its norm and goal." This adversity has detracted significantly from collaborative efforts towards the achievement of optimal educational benefits for students.

We have identified a number of areas where the major stakeholders and the mass of public opinion hope for change. Substantial change can come only from changed attitudes and perceptions among all parties. We believe that such change is essential and can be initiated first by this report and its recommendations and then by a softening of positions in areas where distrust is embedded in policy and process.

There are a number of areas in which change initiated through overtures made in good faith is essential. The first of these areas is the political context, where an adversarial stance has characterized the relationship between the government and the provincial teachers' federation. The second is the relationship between elected and appointed officials. In this area, there is not always sufficient provision for policy decisions to be made on the basis of full information and well-considered advice. We address this matter later in our report. Third, the relationship between mandate, government policy initiatives and implementation processes is often tenuous and unclear. The all too frequent result is that greater emphasis is placed on monitoring and evaluation than on first ensuring sound implementation strategies.

Without implying any lesser degree of importance for other stakeholders, we will primarily address these issues as they pertain to provincial and local units of governance and to the teaching profession.

The Political Context

The political dimension of education is a reality which cannot be ignored or assumed not to exist. Its existence requires that there be structures which place partisan politics in their proper context. Such a provision for separating policy determination from implementation must be statutory. It must recognize the distinction between political roles and professionals roles. This clearly requires that government recognize the appropriateness and importance of full ongoing consultation with the organized profession even while the elected representatives of government, trustees, teacher organizations and administrators are at variance over policy issues.

Full recognition of policy advisory status for representatives of the constituents of the accountable community and additional representation will, we believe, achieve a base for collaborative examination of issues. Our recommendations in this area are consistent with intent of briefs submitted by trustees through the British Columbia School Trustees Association, by teachers through the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, by superintendents through the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents, and by secretary-treasurers through the British Columbia School District Secretary-Treasurers Association. There were numerous other representations which sought an end to adversarial rhetoric among the key players in education in this province.

Suggestion 2

That statutory provision be made for a provincial Education Policy Advisory Council which will meet regularly and at least six times annually. This council should be comprised of representatives of: parents (1), trustees (3), teachers (1), business (1), labour (1), superintendents (1), secretary-treasurers (1), and post-secondary education (1), chosen for a three-year term by their respective organizations.

We propose that the Education Policy Committee serve two functions. First, it would act as a policy advisory body to the Minister of Education to ensure a full spectrum of policy advice on an ongoing basis. Its primary task in this regard would be to review regularly the mission and major goals of education and propose changes where the need for change is indicated. Second, this council would monitor and conduct an ongoing review of major issues facing education in British Columbia as identified by major studies or raised by the participating bodies. It would issue an annual public report identifying, defining, and where possible commenting on the issues. Such an annual report could significantly assist all policy-making bodies in long-term planning.

The Organizational Context

Ample evidence was presented to the Commission that major policy initiatives made by the provincial government, school boards, and other major organizations have often been made without full consideration of available information about implications or possible consequences. We cannot alter the reality of political initiative or political strategy. However, as a commission staff research group analyzing impact and consequences, we are confident that had greater consideration and understanding preceded a number of policy decisions by major stakeholder groups in recent years, a number of serious unanticipated consequences might have been avoided.

Interviews with individuals consulted during the research process reinforced our concern that two factors have contributed to the potential for dysfunction and unanticipated consequence. The first is a pervasive distrust of "experts." A second factor, related to the first, is an emerging deference among senior officials to political agendae, or survival behaviour, necessitated because sound professional advice is not sought, and if given may not be considered or may even be viewed as obstructionist.

We recognize that many of the issues facing political decision-makers are highly complex. Constructive achievement of desired ends requires the support of a high degree of professional analysis and advice. It should be noted that it was understood by interviewees and is understood by us that no official has cause to expect that advice will be endorsed or that recommendations will be approved. The critical point is that this input is an essential ingredient in sound organizational decision-making.

The relationship between corporate policy-makers and their staff is the prerogative of the employer. We have commented elsewhere in this report on the conditions necessary to maximize the roles and the effectiveness of senior administrative officials.

Elected policy-makers and senior officials work together very closely. Their effectiveness is dependent upon clear role distinction and upon processes which enhance the complementarity of these interdependent roles. There is evidence both in existing processes and in some briefs submitted to the Commission that territorial prerogatives and assumptions of "master-servant" relationships detract significantly from corporate and organizational effectiveness.

We have concluded from the presentations and the research data that two areas require attention. First, there needs to be a clear statutory basis for processes which integrate the work of elected and appointed officials. Second, there is a need for structured, ongoing development and training of those who participate in policy development and implementation.

In regard to organizational effectiveness, theory, basic principles, and sound management practices are clearly articulated in the literature. Given that school districts are corporate entities, we recommend that two steps be taken to clarify organizational autonomy and statutory accountability.

Corporate autonomy could be enhanced significantly by establishing operational conditions similar to those in municipal government. The fiscal aspects of this are treated in another report. Throughout this report, we recommend a number of statutory measures intended to address questions of autonomy and responsibility. Given the interdependence of policy determination and policy implementation, we believe that better cooperation and integration could be achieved if senior officials (superintendents and secretary-treasurers) were included in statutory advisory bodies. Provision for this is made in subsequent recommendations dealing with the formation of such bodies.

After considering the numerous issues and problems facing school boards and their officials and after reviewing the minutes of school boards, we are persuaded that the common practice of recording only formal matters and motions is in some instances inadequate to serve the public interest. We believe that the accountability and effectiveness of corporate boards and their officials would be enhanced if significant advice or recommendations of senior officials were a matter of public record.

Suggestion 3

That statutory provision be made to ensure that recommendations made to the board will be included in the corporate minutes of that meeting if that is so requested by an executive officer reporting to the board.

While a number of provinces and states have long-established institutions which provide for the training in policy development and implementation for elected and appointed officials, this is not the case in British Columbia. The experience of organizations such as BCCLEA and others has been that integrated, cooperative ventures in training and development have not succeeded in the long term. Significant initiatives by individual groups have not yet given this province a leadership development centre which facilitates collaborative training ventures for elected and appointed officials.

Virtually every major educational organization and institution in British Columbia has initiated training activity in the areas of leadership and policy development. We believe that the absence of an integrated venture which involves all constituents of the educational community in staff development and training demands serious attention. There is also considerable merit in a multi-agency approach which recognizes the fact that policy and leadership issues transcend territorial boundaries of role and function.

Stable provision for ongoing programs of training for leadership in policy development could do much to overcome the territorial and ideological divisions which have characterized recent years. There are established and successful precedents in Ontario and in the United States.

Suggestion 4

That the provincial government establish and support a provincial Policy Development Centre to provide training programs in policy development and implementation for elected and appointed public officials, and that government appoint to this Centre a board of directors comprised of representatives of education, health, and social services, to include both elected and appointed officials.

Implementation of Mandate

The determination of mission and mandates which set the direction of education is the prerogative of political representatives as policy decision-makers. The implementation of learning processes and the application of curriculum in the teaching-learning situation is the responsibility of the teaching profession.

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility and in British Columbia the Ministry of Education is the agency responsible and accountable for curriculum determination and implementation.

Keeping in mind the distinction between the political context and professional practice, it is clear that optimum results in curriculum development can only be achieved with the full cooperation of the organized teaching profession. We believe that the evidence garnered from the experience of the past two decades indicates clearly how disadvantageous to students the struggles for control have been. The control of policy rests with the provincial government and, where that control has been delegated, with the local school board. The matter of curriculum, however, requires a medium for input and influence from the teaching profession.

Suggestion 5

That statutory provision be made for a provincial Curriculum Advisory Council comprised of representatives of: parents (1), trustees (1), business (1), labour (1), superintendents (1), faculties of education (1), and teachers (4), chosen for three-year terms by their respective organizations.

This council would be empowered to propose provincial curriculum. It would examine existing curriculum and all proposed curriculum in light of the mission and major goals of education established by government as recommended elsewhere in this report. It would recommend an overall plan for curriculum which would ensure effective development, implementation and review processes. The perspective would be one of continuous long-term planning.

Suggestion 6

That the role of the Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committee be defined as that of advising the Minister of Education through the Deputy Minister of its proposals and the Deputy Minister and school districts of proposed implementation strategies germane to the jurisdiction of each.

We believe that regular, systematic consultation by the Minister of Education with representatives of the major constituent groups in education in the province could have significant long-term benefits. The immediate benefit would be the awareness of these groups that they will have an opportunity to bring to bear on political planning and decision-making their awareness and understanding of the education scene.

Suggestion 7

That the Minister of Education constitute a consultative committee composed of the president or designate of each of the organizations of trustees, teachers, superintendents, and administrative officers to identify areas in which further consultation and collaborative action would aid the education system. These meetings should be conducted in camera and held at least twice yearly.

8. Local Governance of Education

Local Governance by Elected School Boards

In providing for the assignment of authority and responsibility and thus for various units of governance, there should be balance both between provincial and local control and between local and school-based authorities.

There are compelling arguments which point toward the emergence of a single central authority at the provincial level on the one hand and alternatively those which propose an increase in influence and authority at the school level. The nature of the education process as it has been established in this province, however, runs counter to any trend toward a unilateral allocation of control. The very uniqueness which characterizes the local school and district presents a diversity which when viewed in the context of socioeconomic differences from locale to locale has great potential to be a strength rather than a divisive force.

Teachers and schools stand "in loco parentis." Parents with highly disparate values will entrust their children to a responsive authority which shows itself capable of responding to their needs. The fact that school boards can be both a local unit of governance in the broad sense and at the same time remain close to the people they serve is a tremendous asset. The potency of this proximity rests in the balance between particular interest and general good.

The existence of a local unit of governance specifically charged with responsibility for education ensures that two distinct mandates can be carried out. The first is the *educational mandate*. The local board has broad delegated powers and can make significant progress toward redressing the negative effects of socioeconomic differences within a community in a manner which ensures equity for all learners, and especially for those in need of special educational services. Because of its capability for intimate contact and interaction with its clients, a local board cannot remain insensitive to local need, yet it can temper significant disparities from one school to another.

The second mandate is the *democratic mandate*. The board, because of its proximity to its constituents, can respond to personal advocacy by individual parents, but must do so with the needs of the broader community in mind. Citizens and citizens' groups are assured of ready access to a unit of governance with direct responsibility for the children of the community. Adult citizens have the option of selecting school trustees who in their view best represent the interests of both learners and those who provide financial support for education at the local level.

We did not find evidence that school boards have served either learners or taxpayers badly. There were very few submissions to the Commission which were critical of the manner in which boards have carried out their responsibility. This paper does not address funding, which is addressed in another report to the Commissioner, except to note the difficulties confronted by a local authority when the basis of taxing authority is shifted in terms of the balance between major revenue sources.

We asked whether this system of local governance of education is likely to meet future needs effectively. We examined current practice in Great Britain, in Victoria, Australia, in the United States and in Canada. Our examination was strengthened by coincidental study visitation to Great Britain and the United States by members of the research team. We concluded that there are two separate issues involved: decentralization of decision-making authority to the school level, and the question of a community-level governing body which establishes educational policy. The first issue will be addressed elsewhere in this paper. The second issue, that of local governance, is addressed here. After having examined the literature and after numerous interviews and conversations with officials and parents in the United Kingdom and Australia, we cannot find compelling evidence that the elimination of local units of governance benefits either the operation of the system of education or the education of students.

In our view, the system of local governance of education through publicly elected boards of school trustees, mandated by the provincial government through legislation and other public policy, and by the local community through the electoral process, has served education well and is appropriate for the future. One of the most compelling arguments in support of this system is that of ready access to government through a responsible local body. Only through municipal councils does a citizen have a parallel opportunity for immediate and easy access to major policy decision-makers.

Suggestion 8

That the present system of publicly elected school boards, mandated jointly by the provincial government and by local communities, be maintained.

We have addressed in a previous section the importance of clarifying the fundamental purpose and direction of an organization. It is particularly important in the public setting, where decisions about the effectiveness of a governing body must be made on the basis of its stated priorities and the effectiveness of its programs. Our discussion of planning has dealt with the importance of a context being created in which local authorities are able to establish long-term goals with reasonable assurance that they will be able to carry out those goals.

A board's responsiveness to the local electorate and its responsibility to the learner demand that its effectiveness in dealing with matters within its control be clear to all. The public has a legitimate right to evaluate the extent to which the public trust has been both understood and guarded by its representative. This stewardship over the public trust for the education of the young is a unique attribute and strength of local school boards.

There are many measures of a board's effectiveness. We propose that all boards be required to state publicly their purposes and goals, to ensure responsiveness to the public will and to provide direction to their staffs. Many briefs have called for a provincial statement of mission within which schools and school districts can develop their own local statement of purpose and develop local policies and programs.

Suggestion 9

That school boards develop and communicate to their constituents and to their staffs a statement of the mission and major goals of the school district, and that these statements be a major reference in policy-making, in program planning, in budgeting, and in reporting progress.

Election of School Trustees

We propose no change in current regulations regarding eligibility for school trusteeship. Issues of conflict of interest and problems of confidentiality, when they arise, are best dealt with at the local level through policies, statements intended to guide the ethical behaviour of trustees, and board discussion of issues as they arise. There is evidence in the proceedings of provincial and branch meetings of the British Columbia School Trustees Association that trustees and boards are vigilant to the need for high standards of conduct by elected and appointed officials.

The matter of trustee elections, however, is worthy of review. In June, 1987, the Local Election Reform Act changed the terms of reference for municipal and school board elections. Prior to passage of this bill, school trustees were elected for a two-year term. In some districts,the entire board was elected biennially at one time. In others, annual elections were held, with approximately one-half of the trustee positions filled at each election. In the latter case particularly, the election of some trustees took place in an "off year" for municipal elections, which were normally held biennially.

The change warrants comment. We considered three areas of possible implication: cost, trustee effectiveness, and system growth and maintenance. When considered in its relative context, cost is not a major issue. The cost of school board elections, whether or not they coincide with municipal elections, is not significant in overall budget terms.

With regard to *trustee effectiveness*, two issues surface: the need to have effective trustees elected to school boards, and the opportunity for their effectiveness to be maximized during their term of office. The questions raised at this time are of necessity predictive. Will "worthy" candidates be deterred by the length of the three-year term? Will the continuity of board membership be disrupted more frequently by mid-term trustee resignations? A simple "yes" response to the first question may be countered by the argument that a three-year term will allow the trustee time to learn and to become familiar with the school district, and also to work carefully toward policy development and change. The current situation with regard to mid-term resignations (six to twelve annually) suggests that the system could handle even an unlikely three-fold increase.

With regard to *system growth and maintenance*, the general concern of trustees, educational personnel, and citizens is for coherent development of public policy and programs to support policy. One view of the Bill 45 changes is that full board elections every three years will politicize elections along partisan lines. This potential might be realized if candidates in many districts coalesce into slates which represent political parties, or special interest groups formed on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or a particular issue. The concern is that policies and practices might be changed rapidly, radically, and to the detriment of learners.

The second potential is for the complete turnover of a board at a single election. While this would undoubtedly provoke outcries from the defeated, it can be argued that the principles which allow this are democratic and to be protected. The major core of curriculum and general operations seems unlikely to fall victim to radical change leading to discontinuity, given the present degree of provincial control. Perhaps such sensitive areas as human life and sexuality curriculum, and second-language instruction, are more likely to be affected by changes in board membership and thought. The major questions must be addressed by the electorate: Will policy development and district operations be rational, coherent, and productive in their impact on education? Will the system be free of counter-productive reversals and sudden but perhaps short-lived change?

In our view, there is a need to preserve a degree of continuity while at the same time ensuring that the will of the public can be expressed clearly and regularly. The three-year term has two clear advantages: it ensures a reasonable length of term for board members, and it coincides with municipal elections, ensuring a single trip to the polls. However, the current election provisions do not address the critical need for a degree of continuity. Our suggestion in this regard is intended to ensure that continuity, and to ensure that the governance of schools continues to be regarded as an important activity, worthy of a particular focus.

Suggestion 10

That the term of office for school trustees be four years, with approximately one-half of the board elected every two years. At each election, a by-election could also be held to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of any trustee unable to complete the term.

9. School District Organization and Administration

School District Size

The question of an appropriate size for an intermediate unit of governance has been addressed across Canada and the United States over the last century. While the sociological phenomenon of "sense of community" has always been and will continue to be a strong political force, urbanization and improved transportation have effected drastic changes. The evolution from one-classroom rural school districts to consolidated districts, to larger school district units or superintendencies, resulted in more program-effective and cost-effective organizations. The early conception of a school district defined as the distance a child could walk to school no longer applies. New hazards, particularly in urban communities, put even the three mile walk limit in question.

Generally speaking, examination of school district size and organization has been resolved satisfactorily. Since 1945, all Canadian provinces have made adjustments. Though established and altered at different times for somewhat different reasons, the current pattern of intermediate units of school district governance and administration, including that in British Columbia, is generally appropriate. Exceptions to the norm are often due to one particularly significant factor. Sparsity of population creating a geographically very large district, geographic barriers affecting transportation, or deeply ingrained historical or political traditions leading to the preservation of a unique community are some of these factors.

Our examination of school district size on the basis of statistical analysis alone created more problems than potential solutions. We examined all school districts in British Columbia and identified a number of descriptors which, if applied, could provide a rationale for the existence of a school district. These included:

1. A collective of schools within a defined geographical area which enables school communities to interact with one another and with their trustees and officials.

2. An administrative unit which can achieve economies of scale in both educational and operational terms without exceeding reasonable bounds of size or distance.

3. A socio-economic cross-section which facilitates equality of resources and opportunity somewhat comparable to society at large.

4. Sufficient size in terms of students and staff to accommodate mobility and maintain a viable level of educational and other professional services.

The existence of a board of school trustees elected to represent their community on a local governing body is in the interests of education in terms of effectiveness and accountability. The accompanying units of administration tend to be both more efficient and more congruent with the public will if units of governance and units of administration are co-terminous. We believe that the former federal policy of governance and administration of native Indian education illustrates the potential hazards of not maintaining a proximity of governance and administration to the public being served.

We have concluded from our study of school systems, from an analysis of the briefs, and on the basis of current literature that educational service is best provided by keeping the locus of authority close to the people. While we suggest that the existing system of school districts continue as presently configured, we also suggest that serious consideration

be given to providing for adjustments in four areas: division or amalgamation, secondary school district amalgamations, boundary adjustments, and parent advisories.

Division or Amalgamation

The current boundaries of school districts reflect the four descriptors cited earlier and the configuration of communities when the districts were formed. Some districts, particularly in the metropolitan and Fraser Valley area, have changed dramatically from sparsely populated rural communities to urban centres. Other districts have changed both in student population and in community character. This process of transition is likely to continue.

School districts which have grown in size well beyond the size of the original community and in which the nature of the community has changed significantly should be examined with a view to division. Where districts have declined significantly in student population and where they have become an integral part of a larger community, amalgamation may be desirable. In either case we suggest a process similar to an electoral boundaries commission rather than action by a unit of governance.

Secondary School District Amalgamation

Demographic analysis reveals that secondary school students in urban areas are highly mobile. The combination of student mobility and the vast array of secondary school courses, given that no one school can offer everything, and the improvement of transportation, have virtually eliminated the effect of attendance boundaries, particularly in urban areas. The potential of combining the constellation of secondary schools in adjacent districts into cost-effective and program-effective administrative groups should be examined. The range of alternatives is considerable. A secondary school board might be formed, consisting of trustees from adjoining districts appointed to govern secondary education. An existing board might, by contractual agreement, assume the responsibility for the secondary schools of an adjoining district. A secondary school board might be formed to assume responsibility for a larger secondary school districts comprised of the schools from adjoining districts.

Any measures initiated in this regard should take into consideration the continuing need for elementary-secondary articulation, the difference in cost between elementary and secondary programs, and the significant ramifications for personnel practice. The potential for amalgamation at the secondary level alone is greater because students are already highly mobile in search of programs and the nature of parent involvement at the secondary level creates a different community context.

Boundary Adjustments

The nature of residential land development has been such that numerous population centres have grown through infill development in areas long considered to be non-residential. In some instances, these small communities are more naturally a part of the adjoining school district than of the one in which they are located. In school district terms, they are to two districts what Point Roberts is to the United States and Canada.

We propose that the Ministry of Education establish a process by which school districts could readily negotiate a change in boundaries to redress such geographic anomalies, with provision for the transfer of corporate assets and assignment of mechanisms for funding.

Parent Advisories

Throughout this report we reflect the growing support for and acceptance of advisory groups. We do not believe that effective consultation or advisory processes can be achieved by statute, nor do we support a decision-making role for such bodies. However, we recommend that all school districts be strongly encouraged and supported in establishing a system of school-based advisory committees comprised of parents and community members, with clear lines of communication and input to the local school and to the district school board. While we address this issue in greater detail in a subsequent section, we have raised it here because such advisory committees are important to effective school district governance and administration.

Small School Districts

The school districts of British Columbia reflect the marked rural-urban nature of the province. Its eleven largest districts are located in the lower mainland and on southern Vancouver Island. Thirty districts of fewer than 2,500 students, almost half of the total of 75, underline the fact that British Columbia is a province of relatively small communities.

The existence of local school districts is both supportive of community influence on the democratic process and consistent with a philosophy of decentralization of government. The number of districts has decreased markedly over the years to the present 75, a group which reflects the geography and population concentrations of the province. While there are a few very small districts which could reasonably be amalgamated with adjacent larger districts, the step would largely be one of administrative convenience rather than one based on compelling educational or fiscal evidence.

The presence of a local education authority is well established in British Columbia. The unique geographic nature of the province means that in some districts, access to the board is somewhat difficult. Further large-scale amalgamation of districts would accentuate the remoteness of government and the sense in some rural communities that opportunities for input and influence are minimal.

To what end, then, should school district reorganization be considered? The accepted answer would be to make the total operation more efficient and effective. The overriding concern, however, must be the welfare of the learner. A major reason for reorganization, therefore, would be that better school environments will be created. We have not found evidence to suggest that reorganization and amalgamation of school districts will accomplish this aim. If the opportunity to improve programs depends in the main on school size, then the question should be addressed at the school rather than the district level.

The recommendations in this section are based on our previously established assumptions about the importance of local community control of the governance of education and on the absence of compelling evidence indicating that small school districts are fiscally inefficient in a province where geography and related factors affect the costs of its services. We also recognize the difficulty, in some scattered, sparsely populated districts, of providing a full range of quality educational programs. As noted above, our efforts to address this problem will focus primarily on the small school rather than the small school district.

Simply to amalgamate small school districts with other small districts or with an adjacent larger district omits important considerations of access, fiscal efficiency, and local governance. The price of amalgamation would in many cases be a further loss of ready access to a governance unit with direct control of local education.

As we have noted, decisions about school district amalgamation should be based primarily on educational factors. The other major consideration is fiscal. Can it be demonstrated convincingly that significant long-term benefits will accrue? In other words, will amalgamation make the new unit significantly less costly to operate? If a decision to amalgamate is made on this basis, consideration should be given to utilizing funds saved to enhance the programs of small schools within small school districts, thus providing greater assurance of equity for learners in those settings.

Suggestion 11

That consideration be given to school district amalgamation only where the local community has endorsed amalgamation, and where the structural nature and cost effectiveness of the new unit will enable demonstrably better programs and services to be provided.

In some instances, a small school district may have access to expertise and technology available to it as one of the largest employers in the community. In our view, the demands of the future and the possibility of continued scarcity of resources create the possibility of cooperative school district-private sector relationships. Computer services provide an example. Because of the demands of its overall operation, a small school district may have equipment, software , and personnel which, with added flexibility and broadened terms of reference for the school district, could be utilized effectively and in a cost-effective manner.

School districts would have to keep in mind the caution that public sector operations must give first priority to direct service to their clientele, and must not compete with private sector operations. At the same time, we see opportunities for small school districts to act entrepreneurially in ways that will benefit industry, the school district, and the learner.

Suggestion 12

That small school districts located in settings where their service capabilities do not exist in the private sector, and where cooperative endeavour would not restrict future opportunities for the private sector, be authorized to share technology, equipment, and personnel on a fee-for-service basis as approved by the board, and that any revenue thus generated be applied at the board's discretion.

Our examination of the issues in this area led us to a further consideration of theoretical and applied principles of organizational effectiveness and leadership. There is much evidence which can beneficially be applied to the school district setting if one realizes that the district is a corporation. The organizational and management requisites for a school district are no less demanding than for a unit of comparable size in the private corporate sector. When we analyzed and considered the number of conflicting demands and pressures faced by a school district's elected officials and their senior staff, it became clear that both structural and procedural changes were necessary.

Many of the organizational principles and operating circumstances prevalent when school districts were formed decades ago no longer apply. Both trustees and administrators function in a world which is infinitely more complex than that of their early predecessors. Technological change, changes in social structure, and the growth of citizen advocacy and participative democracy demand of elected officials and their appointed staffs the ability to provide leadership in an uncertain, often volatile setting.

The parameters within which school boards operate, insofar as those parameters have been defined, are generally stated in legislation. What is not clear at this time is the actual extent of a board's autonomy and accountability, particularly in the area of finance, which is addressed in another report to the Commission. To a large extent, this lack of clarity is a function of frequent changes in the statutory mandate of school boards. In our view, there is strong support for the following initiative:

Suggestion 13

That legislation clarify the corporate role of boards of school trustees in terms of their autonomy, their responsibility to implement provincial education policy, and their accountability to their local constituents, with the aim of establishing a stable and clearly defined provincial-local division of authority and responsibility which will permit effective long range planning.

Administrative Leadership

The implementation of a board's mandate as it leads to local policy decisions is the responsibility of the corporate board. In turn, the implementation of local policies, programs, and ser vices and the effective administration of the board's provincially mandated responsibilities is the task of the board's senior administrative officers.

The basic employment relationship between the board and its secretary-treasurer has remained the same for many years. Superintendents, on the other hand, have moved from being provincial civil servants responsible to the Ministry of Education, to being employed by boards, in many cases as the board's chief executive officer.

Suggestion 14

That provincial standards and the requirements and qualifications necessary to assume the position of superintendent (or assistant superintendent) or secretary-treasurer be established by statute.

The future will call loudly for strong, dedicated, effective leadership in schools and school districts. Waterman (1987) has said following his extended study of successful and effective school districts that

> *we need strategic processes that are robust and adaptive—ones that can comprehend unpredictability and chaos. The main strategic weapon of those who succeed in the future will be information. Their main strategic advantage will be organizational arrangements that allow them to move fast...The challenge, therefore, is to come to terms with unpredictability.*

Increasingly, the events and circumstances surrounding school district operations parallel those cited by Waterman: unpredictability and chaos. We do not say this critically, but simply to present factors to be considered in structuring a leadership response. The processes of school district governance and administration are becoming increasingly politicized. The impact of partisan politics is beginning to be felt in school board elections in more districts than was previously the case. A school district's senior officials operate at the interface be tween the political system, whether or not it is characterized by partisan politics, and the support systems of administration and teaching which provide directly for the learner.

Administrative leadership is a responsibility of service rather than a rank or privilege. It demands competence and it requires trust. We have concluded from the many submissions to the Commission which have called for clarification of purposes and goals that effective school district operation will depend heavily on organizational clarity and on the acquisition and retention of highly qualified and effective administrators, beginning with the superintendent of schools.

Organizational clarity will be aided by the clear specification of qualifications for senior staff and by statutory provisions for school district structure. We have concluded that a structure parallel to that commonly found in the private sector, legislated for school districts in some other Canadian provinces, including Ontario and New Brunswick, and extant in a significant number of British Columbia school districts, is an appropriate form of organization.

Suggestion 15

That there be a statutory requirement that every school board appoint a superintendent of schools as chief executive officer and a secretary-treasurer as a corporate officer and financial officer responsible to the superintendent.

In a political context, trust may sometimes be based on partisan adherence or compliance. The future of education and the quality of the legacy created for learners will demand decisive leadership from a board's administrative officials to support the board in its efforts to make decisions which reflect its dual mandate. Both learners and those who support schools must be served well by boards whose initiatives, while they will be influenced and shaped by many factors, will lay a sound foundation for the future.

We have observed that in times of particular uncertainty and conflict, competent superintendents and other senior officials who have held fast to a few basic standards have continued to lead effectively. We have also noted that while trust, in terms of trustee perceptions, was sometimes fragile in the early months of a board's tenure, and was frequently tested, consistent integrity and consistent performance by senior personnel have resulted in continuity of leadership. There are, however, no statutory provisions to ensure that the decisive leadership we have described, which will on occasion necessitate strong advice to a board about the advisability of a pending decision, can be provided without considerable risk to an official.

We have studied Ontario's provision for due process for senior officials. We concur with their guarantee of a fair hearing in situations of serious disagreement. We do not agree with their assurance of continuation in office of a senior official for several months when a board has serious concerns which will probably lead to termination. Executive positions require a dynamic, intense working relationship between a board and its senior personnel, a fact recognized by both boards and staff. Our recommendations are based on the assumption that effective education requires an effective organizational context. They also assume that those who work closely with the board will have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the organization.

Suggestion 16

That statutory provision be made to regulate basic aspects of the employment relationship between a school board and its executive officers, to include provisions for regular evaluation and due process; and that the specific nature of these provisions be recommended to the Minister by a task force comprised of representatives of the provincial associations of school trustees, of superintendents of schools, and of secretary-treasurers.

10. School Governance and Administration

The Role of the Principal

The past decade has been one of considerable instability and almost constant readjustment of provincial legislation, regulation and policy interpretation. Two of the most volatile variables affecting education have been economic restraint and labour relations. The exercise of legislative authority has put in place two major constraints which pervade all aspects of education in schools and school districts. The fiscal framework and collective bargaining legislation prescribe with great specificity how funds can be allocated and how personnel can be utilized. The influence of these two related but unarticulated constraints delineates and pervades virtually all functions in British Columbia public school education.

In a number of critical areas, the unanticipated consequences of legislation has in fact been the opposite of what was intended. For example, the "Bill 3 exemptions" negotiated in school districts to avoid the effects of Bill 3 resulted in "temporary" seniority/severance provisions which remain in virtually all teacher collective agreements in the province.

The significance of this is that, given the specificity of personnel practices born in the Bill 3 era combined with the regulatory fiscal framework, decentralization of authority and responsibility is largely academic. This is illustrated by hypothesizing a "school based management" situation. If one assumes that the principal is to be perceived and accountable as the school leader, one must ask two critical questions:

1. How much fiscal or budgetary autonomy does he/she have?

2. To what extent does he/she control personnel allocation and selection?

Even if the local school board has decentralized budgeting and staffing policies, the school-based administrator cannot be assigned significant powers in these areas. The formula-driven fiscal framework regulates the resources which must go to a number of specified programs. In larger districts, additional equalization factors may exist. Personnel decisions such as hiring, assignment, reassignment or even eligibility for positions of special responsibility are largely governed to a considerable extent by contract provisions controlling processes born largely in the restraint era and as a result of more recent labour legislation.

The point of the preceding illustration is to indicate how assignment of authority grounded in research, practicality or plain common sense may be severely compromised by legislation and/or precedent.

Despite the restrictions of fiscal and contractual arrangements over which the principal has little control, the position carries more potential for significant influence on the welfare of learners than that of any other person operating outside the classroom. Each of the topics addressed in the remainder of this section presents challenges to the principal. The position will demand on behalf of learners a level of knowledge, expertise, and skill not previously required.

Our investigation, which included structured meetings with representative principals from around the province, has led us to the conclusion that despite the restrictions we have specified, principals can operate relatively effectively. Time will establish whether these conditions, coupled with the new employment relationship which was created by Bill 20 will enable them to continue to function effectively on behalf of learners.

An early and essential step in leading a school, we believe, is establishing clarity of purpose. We have recommended a statement of mission for education in the province and have proposed that school districts also identify their missions and major goals. At the school level, that process is best led by the principal.

Suggestion 17

That each school develop cooperatively and communicate to its constituents—staff, students, parents, the community, the school district, and other agencies—a statement of its mission and major goals, and that these statements be a major reference in all school planning and decision-making.

To discuss today's school principalship in meaningful terms requires that we look realistically at the current work context of the position. The school principal is correctly portrayed as the most strategic educational leader affecting the climate of the school, the articulation of programs in that school and the effective utilization of human resources in the teaching-learning situation. There are currently three areas in which major inhibitors impede principals' effectiveness. These are: undue regulation in the application of funds to the school, increasingly detailed prescription in contracts regarding staff utilization, and a significant increase in the extent to which a principal is expected to administer the provision of non-education support services.

The briefs presented by school-based administrators and our interviews with school principals have convinced us that if the significant contributions principals have made and have the potential to make are to be realized, forces detracting them from education-related leadership and instructional supervision must be addressed. In regard to budgetary roles and fiscal management, we strongly recommend that principals and schools not be viewed in the context of a management system which ties school-based allocations to the provincial framework. Principals have demonstrated their ability to be highly responsible in the application and administration of school-based budgets. The regulatory process which would accompany centralized monitoring of schools by the Ministry of Education according to the fiscal framework has two major disadvantages.It adds yet another clerical-bureaucratic task to the work of the school-based administrator, and it bypasses the school district's capability to manage the distribution of funding to meet the critical and often subtle differences among schools.

Briefs submitted by school boards, superintendents, secretary-treasurers, and principals all reinforced the notion of less regulatory control and more autonomy for district and school levels. The administration of schools finance is dealt with in another report; however, we are persuaded that accountability requisites can better be met at the school district level than by any further direct connection between the provincial level and the school.

Bills 19 and 20 created the potential for administrative officers' involvement in the teachers' collective bargaining process. The administrative role of the school principal in regard to school operations is clear. The overwhelming consensus expressed in our contacts with administrative officers was that they should not be actively engaged in the process of teacher collective bargaining. We are also concerned that the emerging specificity of teacher contracts will inhibit flexibility in staff utilization. In this regard we can only express the hope that the role expectations of principals continue to emphasize collegial professional relations.

Changing social conditions, including economic crises and major changes affecting the family, have increased the demands placed upon schools to provide non-education support services. Even where the school has no official role in the provision of social or human services, the principal is increasingly expected to inform, coordinate, or expedite in cases where a student or a family is in crisis and in need of health, social service, or protective care.

The organizational construct of public schools places the principal at the interface of the political, economic, and social expectations of a school. The paramount role of the school principal is to supervise and administer optimal educational service for students. The achievement of that primary objective requires that unavoidable but distracting demands be addressed. We make two suggestions in this regard.

Suggestion 18

That statutory provision be made to ensure fair and reasonable treatment for administrative officers in matters related to their employment; such provisions to include a system of regular performance evaluation and a means to ensure due process in the event of a dispute.

Suggestion 19

That while administrative officers are clearly in a management role in addition to their responsibility for educational leadership, the Ministry of Education and school boards, in the formulation of legislation, policy and regulations, ensure that non-educational demands on school administrators are reduced to enable them to address the growing demands for educational leadership.

We would also propose that consideration be given to making provision for the appointment, where appropriate, of school-level administrative assistants who are not certified as teachers. Such a provision would, in larger schools particularly, enable principals to give priority of emphasis to their instructional leadership responsibilities.

Parents, the Community and the School

A clear message contained in many submissions was that parents want greater involvement in the education of their children. That message is repeated in the report of the Commission's working group on parents' rights and responsibilities. The notion that the school can or should operate in isolation from its surrounding community of parents and citizens is not acceptable. It is clear that schools which are community oriented and which involve their various publics in a participatory manner accrue significant support, understanding, and respect. For schools which have relatively closed environments the opposite is often true.

We investigated seriously the proposal that schools should in fact be another level of governance and public policy decision-making—that parents and the community would direct and perhaps control their school. This was pursued in two ways. There were direct contacts, including interviews, visits, and analysis of reports and documents of school-based councils in Great Britain and Australia. A study was also carried out of parent advisory councils and consultative committees across Canada and the United States.

The conclusion we drew from the coincident weakening of local education authorities in Great Britain and the formation of parent councils was that parents were not in fact empowered by the changes. The erosion of authority from intermediate units of governance resulted in greater power residing in two areas: the central government and the school's headmaster. The process was described repeatedly as "centralization under the guise of decentralization." Specific questions about the new locus of power did not elicit any evidence of greater parental influence. The impressions gained from an initiative to devolve governance and decentralize administration to the school level in Victoria State supported this observation.

Direct inquiries of parents and community groups and recommendations in briefs submitted to the Commission made, repeatedly and consistently, one point. Generally speaking, parents do not wish to coopt the role of professionals, nor do they want to govern the schools. Parents want legitimate access by having been fully informed. Having been informed, which was often stated as a frustrated expectation, parents and community members wish the opportunity to advise. We frequently pressed the issue in discussion and are confident that two responses are essential. Schools, including classroom teachers in particular, need to alter the widely held public perception that schools are "closed." This can be done by accelerating the current trend toward more open two-way communication between teacher and parent. Second, schools and school boards need to establish ongoing processes of information and input through advisory groups which meet regularly and which have clearly stated relationships to schools and to the board of school trustees.

Suggestion 20

That school boards and the British Columbia School Trustees Association adopt policies and procedures which provide a legitimate role for parents and other community members to be recognized, informed, and consulted through legitimized roles on parent-community advisory committees at each school and at the school district level.

School Day and School Year

We have reviewed provisions for the school day and the school year in every Canadian province and territory. We also examined, to the extent possible, aspects of these regularities as they are handled in the United States, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and Japan. We were primarily concerned with the length and configuration of the school day and school year in Canada and other industrialized countries, and with the impact of variations in these dimensions on the achievement of learners and on the costs of schooling, and with the merits of recent initiatives toward year-round schools in the state of California.

There is constant pressure on schools to insert more and more material into their programs. The expression "the crowded curriculum" has been used in a number of briefs and at public hearings. The implication is that the amount of time currently devoted to instructional activities cannot accommodate adequately all of the subject matter either presently in the school program or envisaged as necessary to produce the type of educated graduate needed for the next century. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to survey the status of the school day and the school year.

The Canadian Scene

The various lengths and configurations of the school day and school year in Canadian provinces and territories are reported in detail in Appendix B. For the first two or three grades, there is considerable variation: Grade 1 in Ontario may be two and one-half hours per day; Grades 1 and 2 in New Brunswick may be four hours per day; Grades 1 to 3 in Newfoundland may be four hours per day; in the Yukon the length of the school day for grade 1 is four and one-half hours. For the remaining provinces and for the other grades in the elementary school, the minimum length of the school day is five or five and one-half hours.

For secondary students, the minimum length of the school day appears to be five hours and thirty minutes except in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, where the minimum length of the school day is five hours. The provinces of British Columbia, Quebec, and Nova Scotia specify a maximum of six hours for the school day. In the Yukon, the maximum length of the day is five hours. The remainder either specify five and one-half hours or do not state a maximum time for classes to be in session.

The length of the school year in Canada falls between 190 and 200 days. In 1987-88, five of the 194 days school is open in British Columbia are designated as non-instructional days. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Newfoundland do not specify a number of non-instructional days. In Quebec, 180 days are required to be instructional days, while New Brunswick has 182 instructional days plus 12 non-instructional days. In Nova Scotia, there are 187 instructional days and eight for either professional development or administrative tasks. Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories each have five days for professional development, although there is a slight difference in the number of instructional days. The Yukon has a 190-day school year; of those days, three are reserved for non-instructional purposes.

School boards in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Newfoundland are given the responsibility of determining the opening and closing times of school and of designating recess times. Saskatchewan boards may vary not more than thirty minutes beyond the designated time without the Minister's approval. In Ontario, the Minister's approval is needed to open the school for instruction prior to 8:00 a.m. or to keep it open for the same purpose after 5:00 p.m. Nova Scotia school boards can decrease the length of the school day to three hours for Grades 1 and 2. In Prince Edward Island, school boards may make provision for extra non-instructional days beyond those set out in statutes or regulations. British Columbia appears to be the only province which specifies the maximum amount of instructional time for the teacher each day.

At least one brief (from School District No. 81) points out that being in the northern part of the province means a much different amount of daylight in summer and winter than occurs in southern British Columbia. This board would like to have greater control over the hours and days of school operation to make them more in harmony with seasonal changes.

Although there is variance among the provinces and territories in the numbers in the number of hours in the school day and the number of instructional days in the school year, the amount of time allotted for instruction in British Columbia schools is not greatly different from most other jurisdictions. It might also be concluded that school boards in other provinces have more autonomy than do school boards in British Columbia in setting school day and year times and dates.

The Scene Elsewhere

For the most part, schools in the United States operate on a 180-day year and a five-hour instructional day. School holidays, except for brief breaks at Christmas or Easter or a spring break at mid-term, are during the summer months. It was somewhat more difficult to obtain accurate information about other industrialized countries, since UNESCO, a major data source, does not provide detailed comparative data in the manner of the Canadian Education Association.

Our consideration of instructional time allocations in other countries revealed clear differences in the dimensions we considered. We do not propose changes in the British Columbia system on the basis of that review. Yatvin (1984) suggests that all facets of different systems be considered before implementing single components. In many European schools, students attend more hours per day and more days per year than their North American counterparts, but many have one and one-half hours for lunch, and games are scheduled during the day. German schools end at 1:00 p.m., but children have homework during the afternoon. In some European countries, school continues during July but there are long winter and spring vacations. Teachers in the intermediate and secondary grades work four days a week with one day a week free on a staggered basis. Students have more free periods, but where there are no supervised study halls, other problems can occur.

Yatvin points out that in Japan, competition is fierce for post-secondary placement and for better positions in the job market. In addition to the 240-day school year, there are "cram" classes to prepare students for examinations. Many secondary schools in Japan and in Europe, he asserts, have a narrow focus with little choice and more years of study in a given subject area. Yatvin suggests that an extremely close look be taken at school systems in other countries before trying to emulate them.

Suggestion 21

That the number of instructional days in the school year be 190, with additional days for professional development or other purposes being added as necessary.

The Use of Instructional Time

We will not address in detail the matter of use of instructional time, since that is a major topic of another research group. We would observe, however, that the matter of effective time use has been heavily researched in recent years. The preponderance of evidence suggests a strong relationship between the amount, allocation, and use of time, and student achievement.

Year-Round Schools

One of the school year configurations to appear in the last decade, principally in California but also in some of the other states, is the year-round school, sometimes known as the twelve-month school. Some have stated that the usual school calendar is poor social policy and not in harmony with the economic realities of present-day urban society (Ballinger, 1985). Other reasons advanced are either economic or educational or a combination of these factors. Economic reasons include: the potential opportunity to save money, delay in the construction through full utilization of existing

facilities, reduction of fixed costs and accommodation of increasing pupil populations. Educational reasons include: to increase learning opportunities for disadvantaged and bright students, to prevent loss of learning through long vacation periods, to improve and reorganize curriculum, and to improve school-community relations by greater use of public buildings.

After an in-depth study of year-round schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, Alkin (1983) concluded that student performance appeared to be improving and incidents of student behaviour were reduced in number. While parent reaction was mixed, it tended toward the positive, especially at the elementary level. Others have concluded that staff, parent, and student acceptance of the year-round program was generally good.

There does not appear to be any factor inherent in the year- round system which suggests its superiority as a system. From a financial viewpoint, it would seem that only where a district has a shortage of classroom space should the year-round arrangement be considered. Most test results show no gain in achievement scores. Positive attitudes may be due to a halo effect or to greater cooperation among individuals involved in the experiment.

Suggestion 22

That where there is a shortage of space which is not likely to be alleviated in the near future, and after thorough investigation and full consultation with parents and teachers, school districts consider the possibilities of inaugurating the year-round school system.

The review which led us to write this section on the school day and school year led us also to the conclusion that time allocated for instruction is prime time and not to be tampered with lightly. The evidence from recent research points clearly toward the fact that effective schools maximize the use of instructional time. While we have not formulated a specific recommendation in this area, we would urge that curriculum decisions recognize the importance of adequate time for instruction and that clear limits be set on the breadth of the curriculum.

The climate, geography and industry of British Columbia are as diverse as the province's communities themselves. Logical breaks in the school year may best be taken at different times in different communities. Local authorities, we believe, should have considerable authority to determine the school calendar within outside limits set by the province. The Ministry's own brief acknowledges the need for flexibility: "Schools will not be bound by existing time structures. The facilities will be used for more hours of the day, more days of the week and year."

Suggestion 23

That school districts be given broader defined autonomy to set the school calendar, to allow for differences in locale and community needs and aspirations.

Small Secondary Schools

The small secondary schools of British Columbia are the focus of ongoing study by those who administer and supervise them. The fundamental issue in that study is the provision of quality programs on an equitable basis to students who will attend and ultimately graduate from secondary schools of very limited enrollment. The work of the Small Secondary Schools study group in this province has been recognized as significant to the study of the problem; the Ministry of Education has assigned a staff person as a project director for what will almost certainly be a permanent dimension of secondary education in British Columbia.

We do not propose to deal in this paper with the work presently being done in British Columbia. We will focus instead on some initiatives being carried out in Alberta and Manitoba. Each reflects the importance of using the communication capabilities of leading-edge technology to enhance opportunities for learners in small schools.

In Alberta, correspondence education services traditionally offered through the Ministry of Education have been a basic resource in a project which has utilized facsimile machines and teleconferencing hookups to provide 74 courses in ten subject areas to 586 students in thirteen small rural high schools. Ten subject area professionals were utilized to provide this service. A further phase of the project will see installed networking capabilities and an interactive bulletin board and electronic mail capability. In Manitoba, similar procedures have been used to offer specific courses to a rapidly-expanding network of small high schools. This project has also led to the development of a work experience program which is providing urban work experience opportunities to rural students.

We have not provided extensive reports on these and similar experiments, for two reasons. First, the information is readily available through provincial jurisdictions and is well known among those charged with the task of improving opportunities for learners in small schools. Second, technology is changing so quickly that today's frontier techniques are likely to be replaced very soon by tomorrow's innovations. Our point is simply that there *are* ways of enhancing opportunities for learners in small schools to gain access to quality programs, regardless of the size of their schools or the remoteness of their communities. British Columbia's geography presents some unique challenges, but the potential benefits to learners are significant.

Suggestion 24

That funds be allocated by the province to enable a significant pilot project in small secondary schools program enhancement to be undertaken immediately, with the specific nature of the project to be developed by assigned Ministry staff resource people working with the Small Secondary Schools project and the Knowledge Network; the goal of the project being to establish, using newly available technology, a prototype program for strengthening equality of access for students in small secondary schools and rural settings.

11. Human Resource Management

The provision of education to the public is highly labour- intensive. Analysis of school district budgets for 1987 indicated that over eighty percent was expended for human resources. The administration of this massive investment in human capital is a complex and major undertaking. Because the focus in education is, as it should be, largely upon teaching and learning and on professional development, the processes by which human resources could be more fully utilized to the advantage of students have not in our view received adequate attention. Clearly, personnel administration and the development of effective structures and processes is strategic to the attainment of objectives set for school districts, schools, and classrooms, yet we found little evidence of long-range planning in this regard.

It is critical to maintain an adequate supply of teachers qualified to meet the emerging needs of education in this province. Planning for the rational application of processes of differentiated staffing to achieve cost effectiveness and developing collective bargaining processes which will mediate tensions between employer and employee are important parts of an overall plan to achieve this end.

The absence of coordinated planning involving the efforts of major stakeholders is revealed in a number of specific circumstances. Many of these are examples of how adversarial attitudes and assumptions based upon control and territorial prerogative have compromised promising and much-needed initiatives. We cite several, not in a context of attribution or blame, but to point out areas in which constructive intervention and leadership are needed.

As teacher salaries increased in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the development of differential staffing strategies provided creative and well reasoned responses to the need for a diverse array of personnel in school settings. The provincial teachers' organization, assuming an intent of displacement and exploitation, adopted a policy stance opposing differential staffing. That policy still stands.

Many studies of teacher supply have been undertaken. Projections by the three faculties of education and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, four major studies of teacher education including a two-year investigation by the Joint Board of Teacher Education, and numerous surveys by school boards and their provincial association have provided a basis for action. We have found no evidence of any significant response or collaborative initiatives to ensure that the findings of these investigations were evaluated and applied.

Many briefs expressed concern about the adequacy of processes for the evaluation of teacher performance. We determined from an examination of professional development programs conducted by faculties of education, professional associations, and school districts that a great deal of time and money has been committed to the supervision and evaluation of instruction. Virtually all constituents of the education system became committed to supportive and developmental processes of supervision. The School Act, however, provided for a system of judgmental evaluation and defensive response in a quasi-judicial context. Despite long-standing criticism of these procedures and their removal from the School Act by Bill 20, the formal three- report system has now become embedded in many teacher-school district interim collective agreements.

The lack of resolution of a number of issues related to personnel practices became critical during the recent period of fiscal restraint. A legacy of Bill 3, the "Bill 3 exemptions," Bill 19, and Bill 20 appears to be that a number of complex human resource management issues have been placed in the context of labour relations.

Detailed examination of any one of these issues is beyond the scope of this report. A separate report focusses exclusively on personnel. However, we cite two examples to illustrate the problem and the inappropriateness of collective bargaining as the means to resolve these issues. While they are important in their own right, these issues are often handled as "trade-offs" for the resolution of others.

In bargaining between teachers and boards during "restraint," the matter of job security became the most critical issue. In the face of staff reductions, teacher associations quite legitimately sought protection in seniority and recall provisions. Throughout the province, the debate focussed upon teacher qualification and years of service, or seniority, as the basis for job retention. Predictably and understandably, the premises and assumptions of the labour relations process were applied. Impasse after impasse was arbitrated, and a body of labour relations precedent was created during a highly volatile and adversarial period of education history in British Columbia. Assumptions basic to industry and labour were applied to the culture of the teaching profession and to the educational processes of schools and classrooms. It is reasonable to conclude from an analysis of the documents relative to this period that neither teachers nor students were well served by the outcomes. Issues of economic welfare and security are now in competition with pedagogical and professional issues. In this situation, trade-offs will often be arbitrary and may be made without adequate sensitivity to or understanding of the impact on students or on educational outcomes.

Another area of dynamic tension is between the presence of volunteers in schools and job security for non-teaching person nel. We observe two concurrent trends leading to conflict which is very difficult to reconcile. Parents and community members, seeking involvement and interested in supporting education, volunteer to work in schools. Non-teaching employee groups concerned about job security react, understandably, with defensive policy positions asserting displacement and loss or potential loss of employment due to the presence of unpaid labour in the workplace. We note from the briefs that there is great interest in and support for volunteers in schools. Examination of policies of school boards, teacher unions and the provincial teachers' federation reveals careful attention to avoiding the displacement of staff by volunteers. There is, however, clear evidence that the matter is emerging as a major issue in the collective bargaining process between school boards and non-teaching employee groups.

These examples serve to illustrate our assertion that the collective bargaining process has become an inappropriate vehicle of recourse for the resolution of some fundamental issues. Major issues of human resource management, while certainly negotiable, should be resolved at the provincial level by coordinated policy initiatives and preemptive ventures by the Ministry of Education and the provincial associations of trustees, teachers and administrators. The evidence suggests that the separate resolution of such complex issues in 75 different school districts is impossible. The development of this report ran parallel to the evolution of the first year of collective bargaining under the new legislation (Bills 19 and 20). A review of the bargaining proposals placed before school boards graphically reinforces our view that two measures are essential if personnel practices in British Columbia education are to regain a constructive and positive context.

Suggestion 25

That the major issues of human resource management and personnel practice which have clear provincial implications be assigned to the proposed provincial Education Policy Advisory Council and to the proposed Minister's Consultative Committee, with their specific task being to develop coordinated policy positions which will reduce the need for these matters to be resolved through collective bargaining.

The current situation, with expanded scope of bargaining and the need to develop new structures and processes, provides an opportunity for action. A new statutory context has been provided. The content of bargaining proposals throughout the province is highly comparable and the debate and resolution of issues is likely to be highly duplicative. The majority of school districts and teacher union locals are utilizing labour relations professionals either as agents or as consultants. We have concluded that the duplication of a negotiations scenario which during its exercise and upon its completion contradicts assertions of independent and autonomous activity is less than constructive and should not continue. Further, the negotiation of all aspects of collective bargaining at the same time and across a similar table in each of 75 school districts creates an inappropriate system of trade-offs between economic and service issues and an increasing measure of confrontation.

Suggestion 26

That statutory provision be made for a two-tier system of teacher salary bargaining, with basic economic welfare issues negotiated at the provincial level for all districts and with the provision for the bargaining of specified issues at the local level.

Suggestion 27

That the basic elements of the system of bargaining proposed in Suggestion 26 be developed by an independent commission of five (5) persons appointed by government and representative of government, the provincial trustees association, the provincial teachers federation, and school district administrators.

12. Non-public Schools

The Scope of Provincial Authority and Responsibility

Education in Canada is the responsibility of the provinces, as outlined in Section 93 of the British North America Act. This mandate is implemented in similar fashion in each province through legislation. Public schools in British Columbia are regulated by the School Act. Funded independent schools are regulated by the School Support (Independent) Act.

Public education stands at the intersection of two legitimate rights. The first is the right of a democratic society to ensure its perpetuation and continuous democratic functioning through a common set of knowledge and values. The second is the right of families to decide how their children will be molded and the influences to which their children should be exposed.

The operational recognition of diversity and the mediation of the tension between the general good of society and the rights of individuals or minority groups is the responsibility of government. Schools and those responsible for them must demonstrate attitudes and actions which show tolerance, a respect for and a valuing of diversity, demonstrated by active efforts to recognize and provide for the expression of legitimate diversity within the school setting.

The existence of a curriculum which is required of all school settings provides the basic requisite which both recognizes diversity and exposes diverse elements to a common core. While the school system has a clear duty to provide a general education, to equalize access it should also allow the legitimate expression of diversity. If the elected and appointed servants of the public are to achieve the range of freedom of education sought by minority groups and yet maintain a strong, integrated social fabric, certain steps must be taken. The first is to ensure that the public school system can include all learners—at least by providing a common curriculum required of all learners. The second is to ensure that provision is made for alternatives within the public system which respect particular aspects of diversity. Third, the provincial authority must monitor or provide for the monitoring of all teaching-learning situations to ensure that divisive elements which contribute to a segregated society or weaken Canadian democracy do not develop. We address these themes in our discussion and recommendations.

Suggestion 28

That public schools be supported in providing expanded public choice as an effective substitute for expanded private schooling. Provision of choice within the public school system should include:

a) Open enrolment policies wherever geographic and transportation circumstances permit.

b) Schools of choice, whereby schools can augment the basic curriculum with specialization or particular philosophical or operational attributes which meet the needs of a particular clientele.

c) A strengthening of school site governance to the extent that the parent advisory group could have a greater impact on that part of schooling which is outside the common core.

Current British Columbia legislation respecting independent schools makes, implicitly, three assumptions. The first is that it is adequate for government simply to regulate those schools which receive provincial funding. The second assumption is that "school" will be defined in the traditional manner noted earlier in this paper. The third assumption

is that the criteria listed in the School Support (Independent) Act, 1979, Section 5, constitute sufficient regulatory requirements.

In our view, a broader interpretation and a clearer specification in each of these areas would strengthen the capacity of the province to fulfill its mandate to provide education within the framework stipulated in the British North America Act. Additionally, it would help to ensure that the interests of the learner will be well served, regardless of the setting in which he or she is educated.

We have offered, in the section titled "Definition of 'School,'" an interpretation which in our view is most likely to meet the requirements of schooling in British Columbia in a future of advanced technology, career change and high mobility, and demand for choice and recognition of diversity. In our recommendations, we have assumed that the province has a responsibility for *all* learners, whatever their educational setting. This responsibility can be discharged only if the province ensures that *all* learning situations are subject to approval by school authorities.

Finally, we propose an additional criterion for approval; one which recognizes the province's responsibility for the physical, emotional, and social well-being of students, including, where necessary, the protection of children. It is important to note that in this set of suggestions, the term "school" is defined as in a previous section of this paper to include home schooling situations. The next section of this paper deals more specifically with the home schooling option.

Suggestion 29

That all non-public schools, including independent schools (funded and non-funded) and home schooling situations be required by statute to be licensed, and that they be examined and approved by school authorities before a licence is issued.

Suggestion 30

That the basis for licensing non-public schools, including home schooling situations, be the criteria listed in the School Support (Independent) Act, 1979, sections 5(a) and 5(b), renamed 5(b) and 5(c), and the following new section 5(a):
"(a) The situation in which a child or a group of children receive an educational program does not place at risk their educational, physical, emotional, or social well-being."

Suggestion 31

That local school authorities be consulted prior to the licensing of a non-public school, including a home schooling situation, as an additional assurance that the licensing criteria have been met.

Suggestion 32

That statutory provision be made to withdraw the licence of any school, including a home schooling situation, if the licensing criteria cease to be met adequately.

Home Schooling

Home schooling situations exist largely for three major reasons:

a) A belief on the part of the parents that their children will not receive appropriate moral education, or that they will receive education which compromises the morals and values of the family.

b) The parents hold a set of beliefs or a distinct value system which causes them to seek specific value-based or religious education.

c) The parents desire to be more centrally involved or directly engaged in the schooling of their own children.

The reasons for the existence of home schooling lead logically to the assumption that students will undertake a curriculum designed specifically to support the beliefs and values of the parents. Examination of actual situations reveals that that is not necessarily the case. Many simply use materials available from the public system. Others use standard published materials not subject to scrutiny by any government authority to ensure that students are being educated adequately in such areas as literacy, communication and computation.

There are at least three issues to be addressed when policy decisions are being made about the existence and legitimacy of home schooling. The first is the question of whether or not the public school system is making adequate provision to ensure equality of access to its services for all children.

Two other issues deal more specifically with the welfare of children. It is incumbent on the province, under the statutory allocation of responsibility for education to the provinces, to ensure that all children are being adequately educated through a curriculum and in a setting which ensures their well-being. That obligation, in our view, extends clearly to the approval of curriculum, the monitoring of progress, and if necessary, the protection of children from situations in which their physical or emotional health may be at risk.

There are also clear indications from numerous submissions and briefs that British Columbians do not wish a laissez-faire approach to the education of the young of our society. There is a clear value placed upon the rights of families and parents to choose; even to choose not to participate in a public activity or benefit. There are strong indications, however, both from society generally and from distinct minority groups themselves that the line between maintaining diverse attributes and contributing to social divisiveness is finely drawn. There is even some concern that the freedom to be educated separately may contribute to social unrest.

We have concluded that it is in the interests of both society at large and the individual to ensure that positive schooling occurs in home schooling situations. To this end we recommend that a number of steps be taken to ensure that home schooling is both as rigorous as that which occurs in public school settings and also as protective of the welfare of the child:

Suggestion 33

That all students who obtain their education through home schooling be registered in the public school nearest their residence.

Suggestion 34

That each home schooling student be placed on the school's roll and counted for funding purposes as a sufficient portion of an FTE to enable the school to provide the support noted in the following Suggestion.

Suggestion 35

That the local school district provide home schooling students with the required textbooks, curricular and instructional support materials, and correspondence course materials appropriate to the grade, to ensure access to the prescribed curriculum, and that the district be funded to carry out this task.

Suggestion 36

That student progress and achievement be monitored through evaluation and testing acceptable to the principal of the school or someone designated by the superintendent, and that this evaluation be the basis of academic credit.

Conclusion

Our conclusion is brief. In an early section outlining the fundamental premises on which the evidence suggested that this report should be based, we identified the foundations of the report and its recommendations. In our view, the structures and processes which set the parameters within which education will be governed and administered are of fundamental importance.

We have endeavoured to focus on the future. In many instances, this has led us to propose structures which will create a framework for action and processes which will help to ensure that the key parties involved in this phase of education focus together on the learners of the future.

The first demand for structures and processes is that they be learner-focussed. The second is that they be highly relevant to the task at hand. The third is that they shape the efforts of those who work in and around schools toward a teamwork which will enhance both education and the Canadian expression of democracy. Finally, they must be reasonable in terms of flexibility, simplicity, and cost.

We have sought to help shape both a system and a climate. We are supportive of the status quo only where it has served learners well and is likely to continue to perform that function. Where change appears necessary, we have suggested it from a perspective which can only guess at the future, but which has tried to guess well. Ultimately, tomorrow's learners will judge the effectiveness of their legacy.

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Appendix A: Critical Questions

As we began to investigate the various aspects and sub-aspects of the governance and administration of education, it became necessary to delimit the study. In an effort to identify key issues, we raised and began to seek answers to certain key questions. We grouped the questions into major categories and sub-categories to cover all aspects of governance and administration. We developed most of the questions near the outset of the inquiry, adding and modifying as new or revised questions arose. As the inquiry progressed, it became clear that some of the questions were more appropriately addressed by other research groups. Some questions appeared to be of less importance and thus were not addressed in depth.

For each of these categories and sub-categories, it is possible to identify indicators or criteria which will show the extent to which a desirable state has been achieved. What is most critical, however, is that we identify strategies and actions which will foster and contribute to the "desired state."

1. Provincial Governance

1.1 Mandate and Goals

1.1.1 Has the provincial government established a mandate and a broad set of goals for education?

1.1.2 Do the outcomes of government (statute and policy) provide an appropriate framework within which local authorities can operate effectively?

1.1.3 Given the potentially all-inclusive nature of education, how are the parameters set for the formal education system?

1.2 Planning

1.2.1 Is there a long-range, mandate- and goal-related plan at the provincial level upon which local planning can be based?

1.2.2 Is there communication and consultation between provincial and local governing bodies regarding planning?

2. Provincial Organization and Administration

2.1 Funding

2.1.1 Should the province fund all teaching-learning situations?

2.1.2 Should all schools which receive provincial funding be inclusionary and accessible to all?

2.1.3 To what extent should Ministry officials be responsive to the local level?

2.1.4 Is the Ministry of Education most appropriately supportive or directive of local districts and schools?

2.2 Personnel

2.2.1 At what level are various aspects of personnel management (recruitment, selection, assignment, reassignment) best handled?

2.2.2 Are there existing mechanisms (laws, contracts, due process provisions) which inhibit or enhance certain practices?

2.2.3 To what extent is current labour relations practice congruent with principles of constructive human resource management in schools and school systems?

2.2.4 Is there sufficient provision for developmental processes such as leadership, creativity, innovation?

3. Local Governance

3.1 The Electoral Process

3.1.1 Should there be a local or regional governing body? Should such a body be elected, appointed, or a combination of both?

3.1.2 Assuming the continued existence of school boards, is the legislated three-year term, with all trustees elected at one time, appropriate?

3.1.3 Who should elect school trustees (age, property, election at large, special groups, etc.)?

3.1.4 Should there be a process for recall of trustees?

3.2 Composition

3.2.1 Who should be eligible for election as a school trustee?

3.2.2 Should further provision be made to avoid conflict of interest?

3.2.3 Should school trustees be elected at large, or by ward?

3.2.4 Who should the trustee represent (e.g., any sub-division of the general population)?

3.2.5 What place is there on local governing bodies for non-elected members (e.g., teachers' association president, parent representatives, etc.)?

3.3 Units of Governance

3.3.1 Should the structure of school districts remain as presently constituted? Should some districts be consolidated or expanded?

3.3.2 Should there be changes in school districts' span of authority to include pre-school and/or aspects of post-secondary education?

3.3.3 Should there be intermediate regional units of governance or administration? If so, for what functions?

3.3.4 What is an appropriate between local units of school district and municipal governance?

3.4 Board Powers

3.4.1 In what areas is there tension between board policy-making authority and provincial statute or policy?

3.4.2 What is the legal responsibility and liability of a trustee as a member of a corporate board?

3.4.3 What is the power of the chair? To what extent should the role be circumscribed by local board policy?

3.4.4 What is the proper role of the board's senior administrative staff in the policy-making process?

3.5 Decision-Making Processes

3.5.1 What, if any, categories of board decisions should be referred to the electorate by poll, plebiscite or referendum?

3.5.2 Is the caucus mode of operation acceptable for a school board?

3.5.3 To what degree should board deliberations and actions regarding property, personnel, and pupils, be public?

3.6 Local Autonomy

3.6.1 To what degree should a board be fiscally autonomous?

3.6.2 What degree of local autonomy should exist with regard to educational programs for public, private, independent (tax supported) governing bodies?

3.6.3 What should be the nature of the relationship between the local public school governing body and non-public school governing bodies?

3.7 Provincial-Local Relationships

3.7.1 To what extent should local governing bodies be subject to intervention by the provincial authorities?

3.7.2 In what areas, and to what extent, should local officials be subject to provincial control?

3.8 Parent and Community Involvement

3.8.1 To what extent should parent and community representation be electoral?

3.8.2 What is the proper role of the local community (parents, non-parent citizens) in the policy and operation of the local governing unit?

4. Local Organization and Administration

4.1 Administrative Structures

4.1.1 Should school districts be administered in unitary (chief executive officer) fashion, or is the option of multiple control viable?

4.1.2 What degree of autonomy should be available to district in contracting for the services of superintendents and other senior administrative officers?

4.1.3 What degree of protection or due process should be provided to ensure continuity of effective administrative leadership?

5. School Governance and Administration

5.1 School Governance

5.1.1 What is the proper role of the larger community (parents, non-parent citizens) in local school policy and operation?

5.1.2 What is the proper role of students in local school policy and operation?

5.2 School Administration

5.2.1 What steps are necessary to ensure the effective administration of the school?

5.2.3 What is an appropriate degree of school autonomy in such areas as program, curriculum, fiscal operation, accommodation of students, and administrative practice?

6. The Personnel Function

6.1 Professional Relations

6.1.1 Should legislation require that elected bodies have professional support with statutory roles and powers?

6.1.2 To what extent should legislation and regulation define the authority, responsibility, and duties of administrative officers and staff?

6.1.3 How and by whom should the work of district administrators and school administrators be evaluated?

6.1.4 How should the work of teachers be evaluated?

6.1.5 To what extent and in what manner should the College of Teachers be accountable to the public?

6.2 Labour Relations

6.2.1 What new structures and processes will be necessary to establish the salaries, bonuses, and benefits of teachers? of administrative officers? of other support staff?

6.2.2 What processes should be established with regard to changes and improvements in working conditions?

7. Mandate and Accountability of School Districts and Schools

7.1 Goals of Education

7.1.1 Do school districts and schools formulate and seek to achieve goals and objectives within a broad provincial framework?

7.2 Accountability

7.2.1 To what extent and in what ways are school boards accountable to the public between elections for their actions?

7.2.2 What should be the accountability of senior administrators to the board? to the public? to the teaching profession?

7.2.3 Who is responsible for supervising and monitoring academic standards, curriculum content and adherence to laws and policies of government?

7.3 Rights and Responsibilities

7.3.1 Should all schools and teaching-learning situations be within the legal aegis of government?

7.3.2 Does the general will of society and the state take precedence over the individual right of parent or student in a case of secular dissent?

7.3.3 How do elected representatives provide for equity and equal opportunity?

7.3.4 To what extent should participation be compulsory (attendance, adherence to prescribed curriculum, etc.)?

Appendix B: The School Day and School Year in Canada

School Day and School Year		Length of School Day and School Year, by Province British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba
Instruction Time per School Day	Min.	Five hours and 30 minutes for Elementary	Not Specified	Not Specified	Five hours and 30 minutes
	Max.	Six hours for Secondary	Five hours and 30 minutes	Five hours and 30 minutes	Not Specified
Length of School Year	Min.	194 days for 1987/88	190 days	Minister has discretionary power over length of school year. Legislation states 200 days.	198 days
	Max.	Same as above	School Districts generally attempt to have schools open for 200 days	200 days	Same as above
Supplementary Provisions		a. Elementary School day: Max.—5 hrs, 30 min. Max. week—25 hrs b. Secondary school max. week—30 hrs c. Max. instruction given by each teacher limited to max. 5 hrs, 15 min. per week.	a. School boards are required to specify length of school day, minutes of school operation, minutes of instruction and length of recesses. b. School boards specify the number of school days, dates of school operation and opening and closing dates.	a. School boards may alter or shorten day by no more than 30 minutes. b. Minister's approval required for changes beyond 30 minutes.	a. School boards determine opening and closing times and time and duration of noon recesses.

School Day and School Year		Ontario	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia
Instruction Time per School Day	*Min.*	No fewer than 5 hrs Kindergarten and Grade 1 may be 2.5 hrs.	Not Specified	Gr. 1 & 2—4 hrs/day Gr. 3 to 9—5 hrs/day Gr. 10 to 12—5.5 hrs./day	5 hrs of instructional time
	Max.	Not Specified	Usually 6 hrs	Not Specified	6 hrs of instructional time
Length of School Year	*Min.*	194 days	200 days (180 days are designated as instructional teaching days)	182 instructional days plus 12 for professional development and administration.	187 instructional days plus 8 for professional development and administration.
	Max.	Not Specified	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
Supplementary Provisions		a. Classes not held before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. without Minister's approval. b. School year has up to 9 professional development days.	a. 12.5 hrs per week for Kindergarten. b. 23.5 hrs per week for elementary students. c. 25 hrs per week for Secondary students. d. School board determines opening and closing dates for period between Sept. 1 and June 30.		a. School board may reduce instructional time to minimum of 3 hrs per day for Gr. 1 & 2 or classrooms on double shift. b. School board may increase maximum instructional time to 6 hrs per day. c. School board may require one recess of not more than 15 minutes for any class on each school day.

School Day and School Year		Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland	Yukon	Northwest Territories
Instruction Time per School Day	Min.	Five hrs per day	Kindergarten—2.5 hrs Gr. 1 to 3—4 hrs Gr. 4 to 12—5 hrs	Grade 1—4.5 hrs	5 to 5.5 hrs per day for first 6 years of schooling
	Max.	Not Specified	Not Specified	Gr. 2 to 12—5 hrs	5.5 to 5.75 hrs per day after 6th year
Length of School Year	Min.	196 days, 5 for teachers only.	190 days	187 days, plus 3 non-instructional days	190 days, plus 5 professional development days.
	Max.	Not Specified	Not Specified	Same as above	Same as above
Supplementary Provisions		a. Regional school boards may adjust length of school day for Grades 1 to 3. b. Five additional professional development days are guaranteed to teachers. c. School board may designate additional professional development days.		a. Noon recess of 1.5 hrs. b. Opening and closing times and dates and length of holiday periods determined by the school board. c. 185 days in the school year must be instructional days.	